

consumer
electronics



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CE LIFESTYLES

DIGITAL CAMERA BUYING GUIDE

NOVEMBER 2005



November 2005
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Are You Ready For the Holidays?

Stay Healthy With CE

Great theater deserves a great setting.



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The sleek, free-flowing lines of Sanus Platinum furniture reflect the beauty of today's digital televisions. And the newest addition, model PFFP flat panel TV stand, opens up possibilities to mount a flat panel television anywhere. An extruded aluminum column extends rigid strength from the steel-framed base to handle flat panel TVs up to 50". The Virtual Axis™ tilting system provides smooth motion with the touch of a fingertip. And features like a hidden cable channel, an adjustable glass shelf and a custom blended silver finish provide the perfect finishing touches to this innovative flat panel TV stand. So if your home theater is short on wall space, your options are now wide open.

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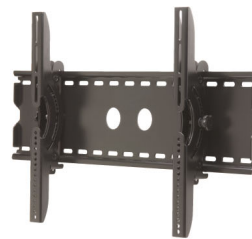
800.359.5520 www.sanus.com

Great theater deserves a great setting.



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Plasma TVs are really making waves. So how do you choose a mount worthy of the splendor of a plasma TV? Easy. Choose a VisionMount™ flat panel TV wall mount from Sanus. Its simple elegance gives you one of the strongest, most durable mounts...with installation completed in just minutes. And the Virtual Axis™ mechanism allows you to adjust the tilt with an effortless fingertip touch...even if your TV weighs 175 pounds. So wherever your plasma TV is destined to be, VisionMount can easily handle your installation and positioning needs, and you can spend your time reflecting on the real beauty of your home theater.



VisionMount™ model VMPLb shown. Fits virtually any flat panel TV from 32" up to 60". Available in black and silver.

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feature topic

Digital Cameras

When it comes to CE favorites, digital cameras are at the top of the list. What other device can let you get so creative with your special memories? And with professional-level technology and lower prices, an excellent-quality camera is in almost everyone's reach. This month, we'll tell you what to look for in a digital camera, and we'll also give you tips on how to buy one for a friend or family member during the fast-approaching holiday season.

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Have Fun With Digital Cameras

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Open

There's always something new, interesting, and stylish happening in the world of consumer electronics. That's why the Open section packs the latest news and trends into the first few pages of *CE Lifestyles*, along with the sparkle and bling that you can buy to accessorize your devices.

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A/V Club

Some of our favorite electronic gadgets are the ones that provide the sounds and pictures that move and entertain us and our friends and family. Whether you want to put together a wireless audio system for your home or just want help using the plasma TV in your living room, A/V Club can help.

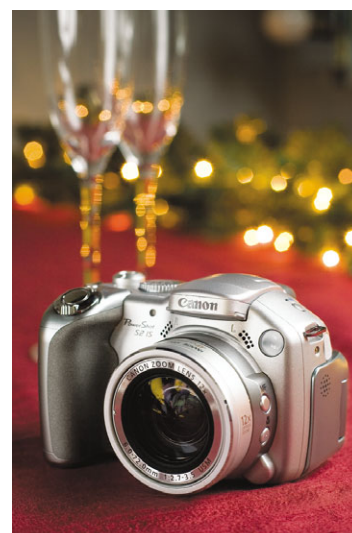
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Digital Studio

Digital cameras and camcorders are changing the way we record the moments of our lives, from quick snapshots of favorite vacation spots to priceless video clips of first steps and other important milestones. Get to know your new digicam or camcorder and learn what to do with your photos and video once you have them.

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The consumer electronics in our homes are no longer limited to TVs and DVD players. Smart appliances, home automation, and whole-house audio systems are becoming more and more common and affordable for families, and with so much available, why check CE at the door?

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CE Lite

Most CE devices are all about fun. Here, we'll tell you about the latest albums and films to catch, so you can make sure your entertainment is as up-to-date as your gear. Also, read what real women just like you are saying about how consumer electronics are affecting their everyday lives.

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Do You Prefer Colored Electronic Devices?

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Editor's Note

Henry James, in his "Italian Hours," succinctly illustrated the relativity of color when he described the Tiber River as "the color of gold, the sentimentalists say, the color of mustard, the realists." A brownish-yellow can be the most gorgeous of inspirations to some people, and to others, it is akin to dirt.

Though black and silver are still the norm with electronic devices, more and more colors are invading the CE space, but consumer electronics designers should take note of James' observation when they decide on the colors of their products. The old "pink it and shrink it" design mentality is patronizing to most women I know, because that implies we are more interested in the style than the substance of the product. Of course, this isn't the case: A study conducted in May by WITI (Women In Technology International), IDC, and Intel shows that what women primarily want out of technology is for it to improve their productivity and performance at home and at work. Obviously, pink ain't cuttin' it. (You can read about four other women's opinions in this month's "What They're Saying" on page 92.)

That's not to say that colored devices aren't fun, cute, and trendy; they certainly are. I get a kick out of them, and they're a lot of fun to look at. But I think that's the point. It's all about perception, and fortunately or not, the perception of a pink cell phone or a purple digital camera doesn't have the lasting power of something silver or black.

Women understand and value this just as much as men do. Yes, every so often we're all "sentimentalists" who view pastels as romantic and sweet; but the vast majority of the time, we're all logical, rational, "realists" who think pink should stay in the schoolyard. More than a hundred years later, James' words still ring true.

What about you? What do you think? Drop me an email if you'd like to share your thoughts.

Live well, friends.

Katie Sommer
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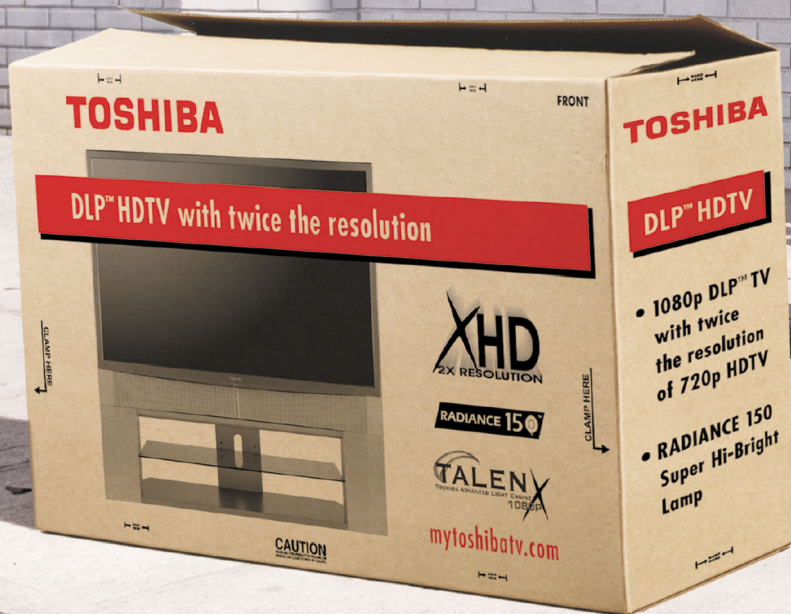
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ce news

COMPILED BY RACHEL DEROWITSCH

A Swedish Masseur At Your Service, Sort Of

What could be better at the end of a long day than a massage? That's what Panasonic is hoping many consumers will think about its EP1272 Swede-Atsu Wave massage lounger (\$2,499.99; www.panasonic.com), scheduled for release this fall.

The lounger comes in brown or black leather and has four 15-minute massages in Hawaiian, Shiatsu, Swedish, and Compression styles. It also features seven massage modes and lets you manually adjust the length and intensity of a massage. The 28-inch dual-steel track lets you determine how high you want a massage to extend up your neck, and the ottoman, when extended, gives you calf and leg massages.

The American Chiropractic Association (www.amerchiro.org) has endorsed Panasonic's new line of massage loungers.



Satellite Network To "Dish" Out Free Subscriptions

It sounds too good to be true: EchoStar Communications, owner of Dish Network, will give free satellite TV service for 10 years to all the residents of a single U.S. town. There's a big catch, of course. The town has to agree to permanently rename itself "Dish."

Each household in the first town to legally make the name switch will get a satellite TV receiver, America's Top 60 programming package, and standard installation. The satellite TV company expects the Dish City Makeover promotion (CityMakeover@dishnetwork.com), which ends Nov. 1, to cost about \$4 million for every 1,000 households.

EchoStar has approximately 11.5 million subscribers, behind DirecTV's 17.7 million customers.



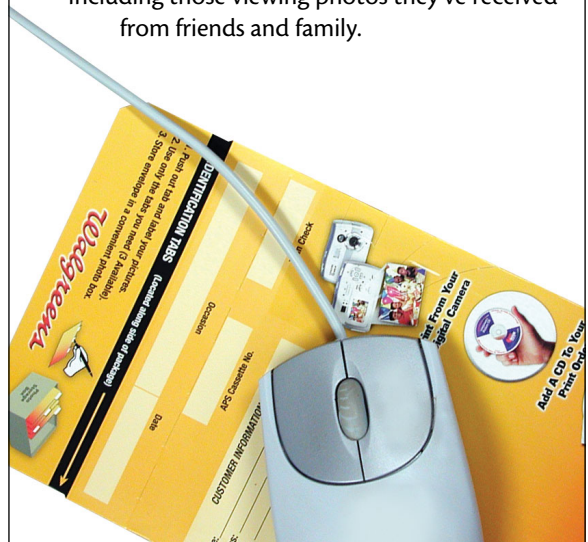
Power Your Laptop All Workday Long

Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, the Japanese maker of Panasonic-branded consumer electronics, plans to jointly develop a Li-Ion battery with Intel that will provide enough power to run a laptop PC for eight hours at a time. The battery, scheduled to be released next April, will store 30% more power than current batteries for notebook PCs.

Snapfish To Go At Walgreens

Some customers of HP's online photo service, Snapfish (www.snapfish.com), now can order prints at that Web site and pick them up in about an hour at a local Walgreens. You can order prints in several sizes, including 4 x 6, 5 x 7, and 8 x 10. This new in-store service debuted at Walgreens stores in San Francisco, Boston, and New York in August and is expected to expand to about 4,000 of the drug stores this fall.

In addition, Snapfish added a print-at-home feature to its Web site. Using this feature, you can choose a print size, edit the photo, and print it at home. All Snapfish customers can use this new tool, including those viewing photos they've received from friends and family.



Research Addresses Concerns About Plasma TVs

The latest volley in the LCD vs. plasma TV technology battles was fired recently with the release of a study funded by Pioneer Electronics and conducted jointly by IDC and Imaging Science Foundation. Results may alleviate concerns you have about the quality of plasma TVs. Researchers tested nine televisions made by seven major manufacturers: three plasma, three LCD, and three microdisplay rear-projection models. The tests sought to determine if plasma screens suffer from permanent image burn-in and if the life span of this type of TV is relatively short.

Results showed that, while plasma screens do indeed have burned-in images, image retention is temporary, and the TVs retain quality images and brightness after extended viewing. In addition, the "black levels" of plasma TVs, which translate into a deeper range of colors for viewers, measured more favorably than in the other TV types, and its viewing angles were the most consistent of all TVs in the study. Finally, plasma screens were judged to have the best consistent brightness from side to side, and they projected colors closest to high-definition SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) standards.

The researchers concluded (based on the nine TVs they tested) plasma TVs "are an excellent choice for consumers who are willing to pay the relatively high price for these displays and want accurate image re-creation," according to the white paper "Mythbusting—Just the Facts on Plasma TV Performance." Plasma TVs have an average price of \$3,999, LCDs cost an average of \$3,599, and microdisplay rear-projection models carry an average price of \$2,266, the paper reports.

Shopping For A Good CE Store

Women aren't just choosy shoppers when it comes to buying CE products; they're also choosy about the CE stores in which they want to shop, and retailers need to take note. According to CEA Market Research, the involvement of men vs. women in making CE purchasing decisions is about equal, compared with seven years ago, when 59% of the initiators of CE product purchases were men.

Below are factors women rate as "very important" when selecting a CE retailer.

CE Retailer Qualities **Percent Of Respondents**
(women surveyed could choose multiple answers)

Big selection	51%
Helpful salespeople	46%
Easy/convenient access	39%
Well organized/clean	34%
Useful product literature	25%
Good directional signs	19%
Comfortable lighting	17%

Source: CEA Market Research

Further CEA Market Research debunks the notion that women primarily are concerned about the style or design of a CE product. Of women surveyed, 51% rank functionality as the most important feature of a product, followed by durability (23%), ease of use (21%), and style/design (5%).

Best-Selling MP3 Players

Quick! Name the most popular brand of MP3 players. Did you say the Apple iPod? You're right, and it's running away from the competition, according to sales results from June.

Brand	Market Share (percent)
1. Apple	73.9%
2. iRiver	4.8%
3. Creative	3.3%
4. Samsung	3.2%
5. SanDisk	3.1%



Source: The NPD Group/NPD Techworld

tidbits

Motorola chairman and CEO Edward Zander announced that his company is developing a line of cell phones so parents may keep track of where their kids are and censor obscene content.

Source: Geek.com

Nearly **36% of U.S. teens**, ages 13 to 18, get cell phones primarily to use text messaging.

Source: IDC

XM Satellite Radio projects it will have 6 million subscribers by the end of this year and 40 million subscribers by 2015.

Source: Amy Gilroy & Jeff Malester, www.twice.com

In spite of the popularity of camera phones, **91% of digital camera owners** consider their digital cameras to be their main device for taking photos.

Source: CEA

AuthenTec, the leading maker of **fingerprint sensors** used in laptops, keyboards, cell phones, and other devices, has shipped 5 million sensors in the last five years, an industry record.

Source: www.authentec.com

Factory sales of digital TVs from January to June numbered 3.8 million units, **an increase of 45%** compared with the same period in 2004.

Source: CEA

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Speakers featured:
• DF65-50 left & right w/ Getty art screens
• DF-Multi L+C+R center w/ ivory fabric

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Explore the world of ARTCOUSTIC - 14 different speaker & subwoofer models, plus thousands of screen choices - and discover what interior designers, architects, and audio lovers have in common - www.ArtcousticUSA.com



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bring back

a flood of

memories.

This is a

wonderful

time to be

a music

lover.

**Archos Gmini XS 202****\$249.95**www.archos.com

These days 20GB audio players aren't that special, except at this size and at this price. The 2-inch LCD gives you plenty of room to see what you're doing, and the 17-hour battery won't leave you stranded. At only 2.9 x 2.3 x 0.7 inches (HxWxD), Archos packs a whole lot into a tiny container. If only you could do the same with your new purse. . . .

**Sony Walkman NW-E300****\$130 (512MB); \$180 (1GB)**www.sonystyle.com

Sony's adorable new Bean players come in colors for every mood. Perfect for storing conveniently sized play lists, the tiny Beans also promise long battery life: up to 50 hours. The matching colored earbuds will have everyone climbing beanstalks to get their own.

Logitech Wireless Music System for PC

\$149.99

www.logitech.com

So, you have a bunch of music on your computer and a nice home stereo system. How do you bring the two together? Logitech's system doesn't require any other hardware—plug one transmitter into your PC, attach the receiver to your stereo, and use the remote to control the whole thing. Putting Joni Mitchell on the big speakers just got a lot easier.



Monitor Audio i-deck

\$349

www.i-deck.com

Make a cup of tea and dance along to your Beatles and Stones classics on the latest British import: the i-deck stereo system for iPod. No matter what version you sport (3G, 4G, color, mini, or photo), the i-deck has you covered. Drop in your iPod and play, between reruns of "AbFab" and "the office" of course.

Polk Audio I-Sonic

\$599; \$49 for XM receiver, plus monthly XM subscription

www.polkaudio.com

Interested in beaming Starbucks' radio rotation into your own kitchen? Polk Audio's new I-Sonic can deliver the Hear Music lineup and more than 100 other commercial-free XM satellite radio channels right to your countertop. The XM antenna/receiver adds on to the regular CD Player and AM/FM/HD Radio for a compact package that will fit nicely next to your new espresso machine.



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Rebe Connie Sac
\$250 • www.myrebe.com

The mother and daughter design team of Debra Weiss and Hillery Sproatt have crossed the overnighter with the all-nighter to create the Connie Sac. A padded interior pocket with a velcro strap keeps your laptop snug, leaving plenty of pockets and interior space for your cords, keys, cell phone, woobies, and slippers. Rebe produces each bag as a one-of-a-kind item and accepts custom design requests for colors and patterns.



USB Cup Warmer
\$9.95
www.cyberguys.com

Coffee or tea? Keep it warm through the magic of USB. Slim and sleek, it requires no power outlet and keeps the steam rolling on chilly November mornings with an operating temperature of 176 degrees Fahrenheit. Weighing less than 5 ounces, the USB cup warmer also slips easily into your laptop case for sessions on the road.



LED Tea Lights
\$6.95 (set of two)
www.modernmotive.com



As you've undoubtedly experienced, it seems to take approximately 400 tea lights to cover the duration of one dinner party. Not anymore! Now you can establish your elegant mood lighting with LED candles that burn up to 60 hours per battery. Use them in your favorite votive holder or alone without fear of wax overflow.



YOUR HOME, YOUR DREAM

Unfortunately, it's not just about the dream, it's about the appropriate design, proper equipment selection, and qualified installation.

It is possibly the largest investment in your dream home so you wouldn't trust it to just any wire puller. A CEDIA certified member has met vigorous industry standards and has been formally educated and specially trained. All necessary investments on behalf of you, the customer. In addition, as a CEDIA member, this company has agreed to the CEDIA Code of Ethics, perhaps the most highly regarded standard in the Electronic Lifestyles® industry.

Afterall, you wouldn't trust your personal investments to an amateur so why would you use anyone that is not a CEDIA certified designer or installer? For more information on finding a CEDIA certified professional in your area, visit the CEDIA website at www.cedia.org.

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- Home Automation
- ...and so much more.



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ASSOCIATION

Learn more about creating your dream home system at www.cedia.org.

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Shopping Site Of The Month

Behr Paint

www.behr.com



W

hile there are any number of ways to give a room a facelift, our personal favorite is with a gallon (or two) of paint. Color can add drama, create romance, or generate energy. And, relatively speaking, it's simple and inexpensive. The only problem you may run into is choosing the color. And because the rainbow of choices can make it tough to know where to start, Behr created its Web site's interactive program, ColorSmart, to inspire you by giving you access to its extensive collection of colors and fun ways to choose your room's perfect look.

Get Inspired

Click the ColorSmart icon on the home page and then click the Start ColorSmart button to launch the program. Search for colors by clicking Color Name/Number, Browse Colors, or Inspiration Library. If you want to explore, choose Browse Colors or Inspiration Library. We used the Inspiration Library to find paint for a living room. When we clicked Interior, we could scroll through images categorized by Style, Lifestages, Mood, and Color Family. We clicked the Spirited picture from the Mood category and then the Mood: Spirited button on the right. After looking through the six resulting color combinations, we chose a monotone green palette called Retreat and were shown our palette's color names. We clicked Select These Colors to continue.


The Preview/Print option appeared, which let us customize our room. We clicked it and selected Living Room. Choose the appropriate type of room for your project, and from the resulting choices, select a room with a similar layout to the one you want to paint.

To transform the white room, click a color under Step 1 and then an area to paint under Step 2 (walls, trim, etc.). If you're unhappy with your selections, choose Undo Last Step or start over by clicking Clear All Colors. When you're satisfied, click Print Options.

Now click Sheen to make your final paint selections and choose each one's finish. Select an area of the room and its corresponding color. Then click Next: Sheen to choose each color's finish. Click Next after each selection until you've chosen a finish for all colors and then click Finish. A Summary page will display your choices and give you the option to make changes. Click Save Project to name and save your room. If you have not yet registered at the

site or logged in, the site will prompt you to do so in order to save your room.

The final Project Detail page shows your choices and lets you click Calculate to determine how much paint you'll need for each color. After you're satisfied with the Project Detail page, click Printer Friendly for a printable page that has all the information you need to make your purchase.

Once you have paint, rollers, and trays in hand, you're ready to begin. Just be forewarned that while ColorSmart makes great use of technology to help you find the perfect shade of taupe, it can't keep you from dripping it on your carpet. 

BY JOY MARTIN

Fine-tuned Color

To ensure that the color you find online is the color that ends up on your wall, Behr recommends checking out the stripe cards at your local retailer. But to be sure you're getting an accurate depiction of Rapture Blue at home, you should calibrate your computer monitor. Because all monitors have different settings, refer to the manual that came with your computer or monitor. It should give you directions on how to optimize your monitor's color. ●

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Today's homes have more audio and video choices than ever before. CD, XM[®] Satellite Radio, MP3, Hi-Def TV, DVD, DSS, VCR, Security Cameras, and more. For many homeowners, this can be overwhelming. With the new ELAN System12, all of these things come together in one seamless, easy-to-use system.

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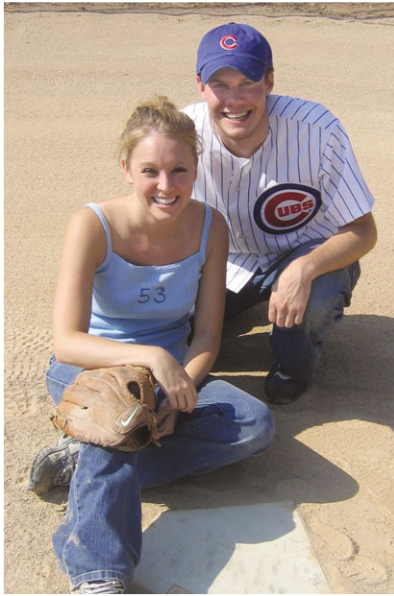
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TALK

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HOME SYSTEMS

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Each month, Vince Cogley and Trista Kunce, both staff members at Sandhills Publishing, share their thoughts about a device or two of their choice. They may not reach common ground on living room décor, but they both agree that CE helps them live well, just sometimes in different ways.

His . . .

There must be something in the wind that blows in from Lake Michigan because I can't get enough of Chicago. Whether it's the savory flavor of a deep dish, Chicago-style pizza, a stroll down Navy Pier, or catching an afternoon Cubs game (my apologies, South Siders), my heart has plenty of reasons to belong to the Windy City. And Chicagoans decked out in their iPod minis and shuffles certainly have a knack for CE (although I expect to see more than a few nanos on my next visit).


An Apple iPod accompanied my seven compadres and me on my first summer road trip to Chicago, its virtually bottomless selection of tunes making the eight-hour excursion far more tolerable. This time, I added Sony's Cyber-shot DSC-T5 to my arsenal to capture the action of a baseball game and provide proof that, although difficult, it is possible to consume an entire Giordano's stuffed pizza in one sitting.

Taking the DSC-T5 to an afternoon contest between the Cubs and Florida Marlins proved to me that it lived up to my expectations as a polished point-and-shoot digital camera. My seats weren't exactly in the nosebleed section, but they also weren't close enough to see the grain on a Louisville Slugger bat, either. In this situation, the available 5.1MP and 3X optical zoom provided the clutch hits I needed to snag a good picture. Because the DSC-T5 can capture digital images at a maximum 2,592 x 1,944 pixels, you can crop your photos and zoom in on the action without losing a tremendous amount of detail, and the 3X optical zoom could easily hone in on the Cubbies' trademark blue pinstripes.

If there's one thing that electrifies me as much as a 97mph fastball, it's finding an eatery or watering hole with personality. I thought the DSC-T5 did a serviceable job at accurately capturing a broad color palette with good contrast even when a dark restaurant's ambient lighting was worse than what five slices of sausage and mushroom pizza would do to my midsection. Like Trista says, I would have preferred having an optical viewfinder for taking pictures in dimly lit areas, but it's a minor quibble.

I'll admit the DSC-T5 makes a fine piece of arm candy if brandishing it in front of your friends is important, but I'm more interested in earning compliments on spectacular snapshots than having people ogle over a "cute little camera." One particular feature I like is that sliding the lens cover automatically turns the DSC-T5 on, letting you take pictures almost immediately.

If you want to experience the awe-inspiring detail of a 2,592 x 1,944 image, you'll need more than the measly 32MB internal memory, so factor in the cost of a Memory Stick Duo media card if you decide to buy the DSC-T5. If you use a DIY photo-printing kiosk, you may need to ask for a Memory Stick Duo adapter; older kiosks probably only have a slot for Memory Stick Pro media.

And in case you're wondering how or why Trista and I managed to end up in the same town on the same weekend, you'll have to stay tuned for the mystery to unfold. 

by Vince Cogley



& Hers CE


The Sony Cyber-shot DSC-T5 digital camera arrived for me to review a few days after I got a different digicam for my birthday. The DSC-T5 is a fashionable camera that I might have purchased for myself had I not already received the other one from my husband.

However, the camera I have been using addictively since my birthday and recently took on vacation to Chicago is the 5.1MP Sony camera—not my birthday present. (I'm sending it back tomorrow, honey!) Like my new digital camera, the DSC-T5 is great for point-and-shoot types who aren't expert digital photographers or don't want to mess with manual controls. But, there were plenty of preset scene modes (Beach, Landscape, High-Speed Shutter), flash modes (Auto/Forced, On/Forced), white balance modes (Daylight, Fluorescent, Cloudy), and picture effects (Black & White and Sepia) for me to experiment with while taking photos.

For instance, during vacation I went to a Chicago Cubs game and got some clear shots of the field that had good color tone by using the Daylight preset white balance setting. (You can't manually set the white balance.) Furthermore, the DSC-T5 is rather responsive and turns on and focuses quickly, which helped me catch those moments that happen in a split second, such as my friend dropping a hot dog dripping in ketchup and mustard on her T-shirt or a baseball player stealing a base. (The High-Speed Shutter preset is ideal for action shots.)

However, sometimes a still image just doesn't tell the whole story, which is why I tried out the camera's video feature during the ball game. The MPEG (Moving Picture Experts Group) video works well, but recording took up so much of the 32MB internal memory that I had to delete some photos to save the video (though you can buy Memory Stick media to store extra photos or video; some video requires Memory Stick Pro). In addition, the DSC-T5 lacks an optical viewfinder, which means you have to use the LCD to take all video and photos. I found this to be a problem mostly in dimly lit or dark settings, but overall the viewfinder omission didn't bother me.

After almost using all available memory, I deleted the video I took at the ball game to make room for some "serious" photos while shopping on the Magnificent Mile. The DSC-T5 fit right in with the trendy stores on Michigan Avenue with its stylish, lightweight, silver body (about 5 ounces with the battery), attention-grabbing, vertically sliding lens cover (most cameras I've seen with sliding lens covers have covers that slide horizontally), 2.5-inch LCD, and Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar optics. I didn't take many pictures shopping, but I did get a sense of how trendy the DSC-T5 is when the sales associate at Tiffany & Co. commented how classy the camera looked in my hand—while I was trying an extravagant Tiffany's diamond ring on my finger.

Maybe the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-T5 will be the next fashion accessory you will see models carrying down the catwalk, or maybe you will see this digital camera in a man's back pocket at your son's upcoming football game. Either way, the versatile DSC-T5 digital camera is part accessory, part snap-shooter that is easy to take anywhere you need to point and shoot. 

by Trista Kunce



Sony Cyber-shot DSC-T5

\$349.95

www.sonymystyle.com

SPLURGE

Want a quality home theatre but don't have Paris Hilton's trust fund? Here's a tale of two setups: one for princesses, one for paupers.*



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Raise or lower your plasma TV via remote for the perfect viewing angle
• \$5,999.99 • www.sharutfurniture.com



▶ Samsung HP-R6372 63-inch Plasma

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Two leather chairs that add movement to your movies—literally
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▶ DirecTV HR10-250 HD Receiver/Digital Video Recorder With TiVo

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Total Price - \$64,861.50

CE STEAL

Home Theatre Systems

BY MARTY SEMS

* SOME OF THE SPEAKERS AND FURNITURE COME IN OTHER COLORS, TOO.

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Included With Receiver (see bottom-right corner of this page)

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• \$14.99 • www.fellowes.com



Sauder 9787-295 Entertainment Armoire

Hides a TV, lots of DVDs, and two blinking black boxes

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• \$57.93** • This product is no longer available at Philips' online store, but it is available at various retailers.



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Total Price - \$1,775.63



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Digitally Deafened

Enjoy Your Audio Toys, But Lower The Volume



Digitally enhanced audio equipment means movies and music sound better than ever. But if you crank up the sounds too far, too often, in time your ears may pay a severe price for all the fun.

Unnecessary Menace

When it comes to noise, one fact rings loud and clear: If your ears absorb too much noise too often, you'll lose part of

your ability to hear. You might lose just a little, or you may lose a lot. Or you might experience tinnitus, a persistent ringing sound in your ears. All of those outcomes are less than pleasant, and all of them are, for the most part, completely avoidable.

Preventing noise-induced hearing loss caused by speaker and headphone output is easy once you understand differences in noise levels. We measure noise using the decibel scale. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Web site (www.asha.org) lists many sounds as comparisons among noise intensity levels.

Normal, acceptable sound levels include whispering (30dB), typical conversation (60dB), or a vacuum cleaner (70dB). Regular exposure to these kinds of noises won't damage your ears. There are, however, plenty of day-to-day sounds that can harm your hearing. These kinds of noises include lawn mowers and motorcycles (90dB), chain saws (100dB), jet engines (140dB), and an extreme example, a very loud music concert (150dB).

You probably know your home stereo's 36-inch speakers can produce sound that exceeds safe noise levels. But consider

Noise vs. Noise

To your ears, loud headphones are public enemy No. 1. Unfortunately, many people listen to headphones in noisy environments, which causes them to turn up the volume more. For situations like these, you might want to try noise-canceling headphones.

Active noise-canceling headphones monitor noises around you and cancel out those noises by introducing inverse signals to the audio you hear, in effect eliminating external noises so you hear mostly just your music. That way you can turn down the volume more often.

Sony's MDR-NC50 headphones (\$199.99; www.sonymstyle.com) promise to cut down on external noise while providing top-quality audio. These headphones are pricey, but they require only one AAA battery (other headphones need much more power), and at just 10 ounces, they're fairly light and portable.

Resist the temptation to buy cheap noise-canceling headphones, which don't have much cancellation effect and may introduce hiss into your music. And remember that even though active noise cancellation isn't perfect, it does work fairly well, helping you preserve one of your most precious senses. ●

this: At full volume, many personal music players can reach almost 120dB, which is far too loud for regular use.

But it's important to remember that loudness is only one factor of sound exposure. Duration also plays a major role. According to OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration; www.osha.gov), frequent exposure to sounds 85dB and greater for more than eight hours per day threatens your long-term hearing health.

Editor's Observation

When first using noise-canceling headphones, I noticed a strange side effect. I'll feel a little disoriented at first because of the waves emitted by the noise-canceling circuits, and a few times, those waves led to a feeling of pressure in my inner ear and (strangely) a little nausea. This happens with both the Sony headphones that Nathan mentions, as well as Outside The Box's Solitude headphones (\$199; www.protravelgear.com), so I know it's not a weakness in any one model. (These are both otherwise excellent sets.) If you want to use noise-canceling headphones, it's a toss up of what you'd rather prevent: noise or slight discomfort every so often. ●

by Katie Sommer

Listening to the latest Dido album at medium volume four times a day might put your hearing at as much risk as listening once at a much higher volume.

Know Your Foe

In addition to understanding the noise potential of the devices you use, you should also know that different listening situations affect perceived noise levels.

For example, listening to a loud movie in your living room isn't the same as going to an outdoor rock concert. That's because the small space in your home traps and echoes the sounds from your TV speakers, whereas music from an outdoor concert dissipates through the large spaces of air before it reaches you, unless, of course, you're close to the speakers.

That's why blaring music through your headphones is one way to ruin your hearing in a hurry. Headphones project noise directly into your ears, so there's nowhere for the sound to go but into your ear canal. What's more, the longer you listen to headphones, the faster you experience hearing fatigue, also known as a temporary threshold shift. That means that as your ears become fatigued, your headphones sound quieter even though the volume level is still the same, so many people crank up the volume even more. Studies at National Acoustic Laboratories in Sydney, Australia, revealed that a


quarter of personal music system listeners turn up the sound to damaging levels.

These kinds of problems intensify where automobile traffic or other peoples' conversations threaten to drown out your tunes. And listening to loud headphones while you're working out is particularly dangerous because you have to turn them up to hear over your own heartbeat and breathing.

Don't Ignore It

Worried yet? You should be. Long-term, lower noise levels are insidious threats that might not manifest themselves in any noticeable form for years. More powerful noises often cause noticeable problems right away. So if your hearing isn't as acute after a noisy movie as it was before the show, your ears took a beating. And if your ears are ringing after a loud concert, your ears are sending you a clear warning.

Reduce the volume or wear earplugs to reduce the amount of sound that reaches your ears.

Ignore the ominous signs, and you'll eventually suffer the consequences. But turn down the sound and listen to your ears when they warn you, and they'll reward you with a lifetime of listening joy. 

BY NATHAN CHANDLER

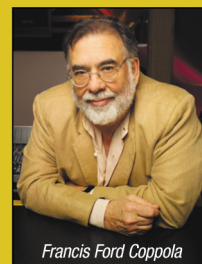
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Kids & Technology

Part Two: Audio Players



S

eems like yesterday we were carrying our personal stereos on our shoulders. Bigger was definitely better, especially for break-dancers kissing the concrete as cassette tapes blared from their boomboxes. Your kids may snicker at the thought of you carrying a 12-pound boombox. Today, they're wearing MP3 players that weigh only ounces and listening to downloaded digital music.

Yet one truth links the generations: Music is as much a part of life today as it was years ago. Kids want to listen to *their* music on popular players, and parents want affordable products, controlled volume, and tolerable lyrics. We can help you with all three.

Think Outside The Boombox

Kids of all ages care about the look of an audio player. And to the young ones, high-tech features take a backseat to ease of use, multiple functions (the "fun toy" factor), and the presence of a popular animated character. It's no surprise that companies such as Disney (www.disneydirect.com) and Nick Jr.com (www.nickjr.com) sell players with that appeal. What may surprise you is the variety of players on the market just for your kids.

Disney's Buzz Boombox Backpack (\$19.50) incorporates the boombox right into a backpack bearing the likeness of Buzz Lightyear from "Toy Story." The

AGE APPROPRIATE

PLAYERS

As you shop for an audio player for your kids, look for models that will appeal to their ages.

PRESCHOOL

Blue's Clues Portable Cassette Player

www.nickjr.com • \$19.99

This plays and records cassettes and comes with a sing-along microphone. Powered by four C batteries.



Dora The Explorer Sing-Along CD Player

www.nickjr.com • \$34.99

Everyone's favorite bilingual preschool pal now appears on a CD player that comes with headphones and a microphone. A Dora Personal CD Player (\$29.99) is available without the microphone. Both require two AA batteries.



Classic Mickey CD Boombox

www.disneydirect.com • \$39.99

This AM/FM radio and CD player also comes with three interchangeable Disney faceplates. Uses six C batteries, but AC cord is included.



PRIMARY

SpongeBob SquarePants Splash-Resistant CD Player

www.nickjr.com • \$44.99

From the bathroom to the beach, this CD player and AM/FM radio will be a favorite take-along. Requires six C batteries.



Disney Princess Portable CD Player

www.disneydirect.com • \$39.99

This player includes wrap-around headphones and three interchangeable Disney faceplates. Runs on two AA batteries.



Hello Kitty Boom Box

www.sanrio.com • \$73.49

Girls will love the many functions in this CD and cassette player with AM/FM radio. Uses AC power or eight C batteries.



TWEENS

iPod shuffle

www.apple.com • \$99 and up

Load the 512MB iPod shuffle with up to 120 songs or the 1GB model (\$129) with up to 240 songs. Both weigh less than an ounce and come with earbuds.



Sony S2 Sports CD Boombox (model ZS-X10)

www.sonystyle.com • \$99.95



This water-resistant AM/FM radio and CD player has an ergonomically designed handle for easy on-the-go listening. Runs on AC power or six C batteries.

GPX Bubble-Top Portable CD Player With 60-Second Anti-Skip (model CDP3154BBL)

www.gpx.com • \$39.99

"Bubble-top" not only describes the shape of the door on this cool-looking player featuring the bass boost system, but also the motif. Comes in red or blue, includes a belt clip, and runs on two AA batteries.



TEENS

Panasonic RX-D29 CD/Radio Cassette With MP3 Playback

www.panasonic.com • \$79.95

Play CDs and MP3s burned onto CD-R/RWs or enjoy the AM/FM radio and its 32 preset stations. Comes with a remote control and four speakers.



Lyra RD2215 MP3 Player

www.rcaaudiovideo.com • \$119.99



This silver player has a recordable FM tuner, 50 hours of battery life, and an accessory kit.

iPod

www.apple.com/ipod • \$299 and up

Choose the 20GB or the 60GB model (\$399), both of which store songs, display photos, have a white finish, and come with earbuds.



a/v club

boombox is an FM radio with two speakers and a headphone jack, but there's plenty of space to store toys, books, and more. The Princess Boombox Backpack (\$19.50) is available for girls.

Disney also sells a Princess Jewelry Box CD Player (\$49.99). Not only can your little princess play her favorite CDs on it, but she can also store her jewelry (and the CDs) in the interior compartments.

If you think your kids might be too young to handle CDs, a Barbie Dance With Me Talking Boombox (\$29.99; www.kiddirect.com) might be a good option. This boombox includes three "CDs" that don't use real CD technology, but they load into the top of the boombox as a real CD would (though the player can't play real CDs). The boombox detects the correct music when someone presses Play.

Mini Options

Teens want their tunes big and their players small, especially when it comes to MP3 players. Of course, you can't think of MP3 players without thinking of the iPod. Apple's ubiquitous player is available in an ultra-hip model: the 20GB iPod U2 Special Edition (\$329; www.apple.com). On the front, your teen can scroll through the two-inch, full-color display to find songs or games. On the back are the laser-engraved autographs of each U2 band member. The player stores up to 5,000 songs and can play up to 15 hours on one battery charge.



The Nike MP3RUN player from Philips (\$279.99; www.store.philips.com) is designed for your budding athlete, especially runners. It plays MP3 and WMA files and comes with an armband, so it can be worn during a workout. What's more, a built-in tracking feature automatically records the run's distance and pace.

At home, your teen may appreciate a player she can move into her dorm room someday. The blue and silver Slim-2000 3-Disc CD Changer from Sanyo Fisher (\$299.99; www.fisherav.com) comes with interchangeable grills (blue, black, and maroon), and you can mount it on a wall—it's only 3.5 inches deep.

Listen Up!


As the one who's likely footing the bill for your kid's audio player, carefully consider the pros and cons of this purchase. Find out if the player comes with accessories and how much they cost if they are sold separately. For younger children, you

must decide if the player is worth the cost given how quickly they might outgrow it.

Your most serious concern, however, is the health risk that loud music poses to your children. It may seem like wishful thinking that your teens will keep the music at an acceptable level, but it's up to you to help them realize they should. On its Web site, the National Hearing Conservation Association (www.hearingconservation.org) lists personal stereos as one of the sources of loud sounds that may contribute to children suffering from permanent hearing loss. Hearing noise of 85 decibels or above for an extended period of time (or a short amount of time for a much louder sound) could permanently harm hearing.

Thus, as you set up the rules you want your kids to abide by when they listen to their stereos and MP3 players, standards about volume levels should be at the top of the list. See "Digitally Deafened" on page 21 for more information about various noises and the effect sound levels can have on hearing loss.

Family Harmony

Whether they admit it or not, your kids need your guidance as they choose what to listen to and how to listen to it. Their musical tastes may never agree with yours, but your family can exist in harmony if you make decisions together. 

THE RULES

CLIP AND USE THESE GUIDELINES FOR HELPING YOUR KIDS "EARN" THE RIGHT TO LISTEN TO THEIR MUSIC.

- 1 Is the volume control set at the medium level or below?
- 2 Have you listened to more than your daily allotment music/radio already?
- 3 Is it too late in the evening to listen?
- 4 Are you listening to a radio station that your parents have approved?
- 5 Do your parents know which songs you've downloaded from online stores?

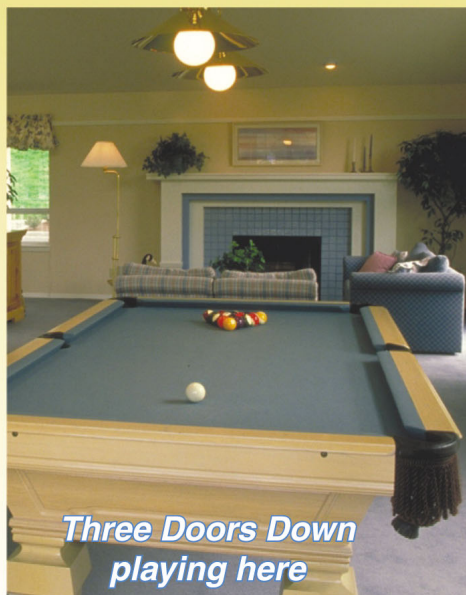
CE LIFESTYLES / NOVEMBER 2005

BY RACHEL DEROWITSCHE

Getting SIRIUS? Going XM? Do It Times 3!



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Looking at adding satellite radio? With the huge variety of professionally programmed music, sports and entertainment channels, there's a lot to choose from. The real challenge becomes refereeing the battle of who gets to listen to what. ***Only now you don't have to!***

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So whether Jr. wants to listen to his favorite sports team, you want to listen to your favorite classic rock-n-roll, or your daughter wants to hear the latest from Ashley Simpson, nobody has to compromise. **TriplePlay** is the solution you've been looking for.

To find out where you can get a TriplePlay near you, call Antex at 1-800-338-4231 or look us up at www.antex.com



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tips To Troubleshoot Your CD Player

1

Remember, Media Is Fragile

Almost everyone has had her favorite CD scratched or damaged to the point of making it unplayable. If you want your CDs to last, you need to protect them and keep them clean. Store CDs in jewel cases when not in use and keep them out of your kids' hands; one sticky fingerprint could easily render a CD unplayable. If your CDs do get dirty and refuse to play, clean them with Kensington's Media Guardian CD Cleaner (\$9.99; www.kensington.com). Place the CD in the radial cleaner and rotate; its cleaning pad will free your disc of fingerprints and smudges. A clean CD is a happy (and playable) CD.

2

Grease Is Not The Word

If the CD is not the problem (and you know this because it plays in a different player), the player itself may be the culprit. CD players gather dust, grease, and grime, and when the laser lens gets dirty, it's hard (if not impossible) for the player to read your CDs. A dirty player will often spin a disc to no avail and then display an error message. To prevent or alleviate this glitch, invest in a cleaner such as Memorex's CD/DVD Laser Lens Cleaner (\$9.99; www.memorex.com). Put the CD in your player, and as it runs, it'll clean the dust and buildup off the lens.

3

Make The Connection

Although cleaning tends to solve a good number of CD player-related problems, there could be problems with the player. If your CD still doesn't play, try smacking the side of your player as hard as you possibly can. OK, stop! That was a joke; don't do that. Instead, check all the cords and connections such as player to amplifier or receiver, receiver to speaker, and so on. Heat can also stop a player or make it skip. Remove any nonessential items (decorations, plants, jewel cases, etc.) from around the player and its vents. If there's a good chance your CD player has overheated recently, have its power supply checked and replaced by a local repair shop.

4

Compatibility Issues

Perhaps the CD you are trying to play is one you burned for yourself on your computer. CD-R and CD-RWs are often incompatible with different players. A CD player might play one brand of CD-R media but not another, so if you have problems with a burned CD, first use another brand of CD-R. CD-RW media is usually less likely to play in a stereo than CD-R media, so use CD-Rs to save time and money. When burning a CD, configure the session to close or finalize the disc when the burn session is complete.

5

Always Maintain

All of your CE devices need regular maintenance, and your CD player is no exception. Even before problems begin, keep the player and its chassis clean. Always use CE-friendly cleaning supplies and antistatic cloth materials. (Endust For Electronics wipes, for instance.) CD players wear over time, but if you take proper care of them, they'll last much longer.



BY ELIZABETH DIXON

Wake and sleep to your iPod®?

iHome™, the home audio system for your iPod, puts a new spin on your tunes!

Keeping track of time takes on a whole new meaning when it's your time and your "tracks". Your iPod gets a home base with the iHome system — dock it, charge it, listen up or fade it out. iHome provides it all.

The iHome is a complete home audio system with digital AM/FM radio, gentle wake and sleep, and an easy-to-use alarm clock. Compatible with all docking iPods (3g, 4g, photo, mini), the removable inserts allow you to dock and charge your iPod directly from the base. Or, use the patch cord that comes with the iHome to connect with non-docking iPods, other mp3 players and audio devices such as CD players. The iHome's stereo capabilities include high-fidelity stereo drivers in specially designed Reson8™ speaker chambers which deliver astounding clarity, depth and power. You can even connect it to your own stereo system for more iPod playing options and control.

Start the day your way

The iHome gives you a personal, programmable alarm system that puts a new spin on being "in tune" every morning. Find the setting that works best for you with Wake to iPod and Sleep to iPod. You can wake up or fall asleep to your iPod tracks, AM/FM radio or a buzzer. Not one for rude awakenings? No problem. The Gradual Wake and Gradual Sleep features increase/decrease the alarm/sleep volumes to ease you into the day or night.

Reson8 Speaker Technology



The custom Strontium-Ferrite speakers offer increased sensitivity, producing clearer, crisper highs, richer, more responsive midrange and fuller, driving bass. Reson8 technology provides detailed, dynamic stereo sound that does justice to every track on your playlist, whether it's classical or rock.

iHome™
the home system for your iPod®



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- Wake and sleep to radio or your iPod
- Works with all docking iPods*

The extra-large, backlit custom LCD display is easy to read and the iHome even takes the hassle out of daylight savings with the auto-set clock feature. The radio includes a built-in automatic frequency control and PLL digital radio tuning for enhanced reception.

And you don't need to sacrifice style. The clean, contemporary design complements the look of your iPod as well as your home or office, giving you multiple capabilities in a single space.

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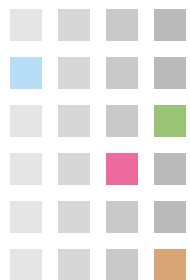
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Specs Make The Camera

Know What Features You Need For Those Nice, Bright Colors



or over-

whelmed electronics consumers, the digital camera craze really couldn't be any more insane, partly because camera makers introduce a load of new models with more features and better performance every few months. To navigate through all these products, you need a little patience and basic knowledge of digicam features. Then, you can find a camera with the right capabilities at a price you can afford.





Features You Need

There are a lot of factors to consider before you buy a new camera, but for starters, ask yourself two questions. How do you plan to use the camera? And what size prints do you want?

Heft. If you want a camera you can take everywhere, you should buy a compact model that's easy to carry with you. If you fancy a more advanced camera with many manual options, you might have to buy a larger camera adorned with more controllers and buttons and also a broader range of powerful functions that will let you tweak dozens of settings to match your preferences.

Size of prints. You should also consider the size of prints you would like for your photo collection. If you rarely print your photos, you don't need a high-resolution 6 or 8MP camera designed to

The Megapixel Maze

Camera sensor technology advances at a phenomenal rate, and in the end you benefit because you can get more megapixels for your money. But exactly how many megapixels do you need?

The answer to that question depends mostly on how you plan to use your photos. If you just want simple snapshots that you can email to your friends or post to a Web site, you might want to find an aging but totally capable 2MP camera on eBay and save yourself a lot of money. In fact, for basic purposes, buying a camera with more than 3MP might be a hassle because due to bandwidth and email inbox restrictions, you may need to constantly resize higher resolution photos, so they're small enough to email or upload.

On the other hand, if you like to print your photos, you'll need more

megapixels. If you invest in a 3 or 4MP camera, you'll be able to create crisp 5 x 7 prints, and often these cameras let you print 8 x 10 photos with little loss in clarity. Most 5MP models will let you make very nice 8 x 10 and letter-sized prints, and for larger prints you'll typically want 6MP or more.

Remember, if you often crop your pictures, you should invest in more megapixels, so your edited images will contain enough data to create a sharp print. And as you shop, keep in mind that many very inexpensive, high-resolution cameras from no-name manufacturers tend to have low-quality lenses and sub-par construction quality that result in imperfect (and often downright ugly) photos. Buy a more expensive brand with a lower megapixel rating, and you'll likely wind up with much better images. ●

create sharp enlargements. Instead, you can buy a 3 or 4MP camera and never notice the difference in image quality. See our "The Megapixel Maze" sidebar for more information on determining how many megapixels you need.

Zoom. After you consider camera size and resolution issues, you'll want to mull over other crucial features. More specifically, check out zoom and power specifications.

Remember that optical zoom and digital zoom are very different. Optical zoom relies on the camera's lens to magnify distant objects and help you fill the frame. Most small to medium-sized cameras have 3X optical zoom, and a few bulkier models may have 10X or 12X zoom. Digital zoom with its artificially high numbers, such as 10X or 20X, might look more appealing, but remember that this type of zoom

merely creates an illusion of optical zoom, which often results in fuzzy images. Don't let digital zoom specifications influence your buying decision, and if you want the sharpest possible photos, turn off this feature when you set up your camera.

Power. Also know that digital cameras consume much more power than their film predecessors, so you need to make sure your camera has a power source that works best with your picture-taking habits. Many cameras use AA batteries you can find anywhere, but the tradeoff is that that you'll blow a lot of cash on batteries. You can reduce costs by investing in rechargeable AAs, but these don't usually last quite as long as regular alkaline batteries and need frequent charging.

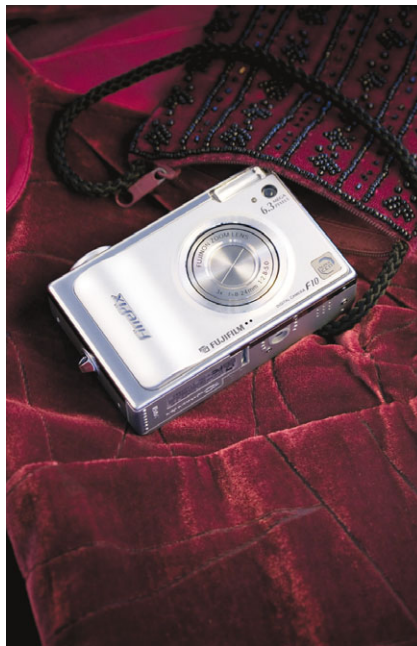
Other cameras use rechargeable power packs that come with special chargers.

Casio's EX-S500 (\$399.99; www.casio.com), for instance, uses a power pack that lets you take about 200 photos. These packs typically last much longer than AA batteries, but if you lose the pack while you're on a trip, you'll have a hard time finding a replacement. You can invest in additional power packs, but they're usually very expensive (\$50 or more), and unlike AA batteries, you can't pick up a power pack at any gas station when you're on the run.

Features You Want

Features such as a zoom lens and batteries are indispensable camera components, but most digital cameras also integrate dozens of other features that aren't necessary but still quite useful. As you shop, you might want to find a camera with the following extras.

Digital cameras aren't as hardy as their film brethren, meaning they're more sensitive to water and dust. Olympus makes cameras, such the Stylus 500



Digital (\$299.99; www.olympusamerica.com), that have better seals to resist these elements.

All digital cameras have another trait in common, and it's that their autofocus

systems struggle to lock onto subjects in low light. However, if you choose a camera with an autofocus-assist beam, you'll get much more accurate focus in scenes with dim ambient light. The Canon PowerShot SD400 (\$399.99; www.powershot.com) is one camera with such a feature.

In addition, in difficult lighting situations, many cameras warp colors. Most cameras come with several preset white balance settings that help create accurate colors under varied lighting, but quite often these modes produce funky color casts. Check the camera's specs to see if it's equipped with a custom or manual white balance mode. With a customizable white balance mode, such as the one on Fujifilm's FinePix F10 Zoom (\$399; www.fujifilm.com), you can calibrate your camera for any light source, and in doing so, you can avoid having to adjust color levels with your editing program after you're done shooting.

Thanks to new camera models, it's also getting easier to transfer pictures to a PC or printer. Nikon's (www.nikonusa.com) Coolpix P1 (\$549.95) and P2 (\$399.95) cameras use built-in wireless networking that helps you zip photos to your hard drive or a printer equipped with the appropriate wireless adapter.

Flash Memory Matters

As camera manufacturers continually churn out faster and smaller models, flash memory card companies try to keep pace, producing tiny new formats with super-fast read and write speeds. Make sure you buy the right card, with the right capacity.


The most popular flash formats are SD (Secure Digital), CF (CompactFlash), MMC (MultiMediaCard), MemoryStick, and xD-Picture Card. At first, it might seem silly to let a flash card format's popularity dictate your camera choice, but consider this: If you have other digital devices, such as a PDA, notebook PC with a flash card slot, or flash-based music player, you can make sure each product uses the same format and

swap cards among these devices, and thus, save money on memory costs.

Capacity is another major flash-card concern. If you have a 4 or 5MP camera, your image files will often be 2MB or larger, and video clips, of course, are even bigger. That's why you shouldn't try to cut costs by buying a low-capacity card. At bare minimum, you should buy a 256MB card, but consider opting for more memory. You'll see that 512MB cards rarely top \$40, and you'll find massive, 1GB cards for less than \$100.

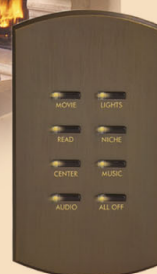
When you buy, stick with a brand you recognize. Invest in a super-cheap, generic flash card, and you'll get what you pay for—second-class memory that's much more likely to corrupt your irreplaceable image files. ●

Find It Online

After you pick out the camera you want, all you have to do is find the right price. If you're looking to save some money, consider buying online, where many retailers offer significant discounts on all but the hottest models. Just be sure to check out the store's reputation at Reseller Ratings (www.resellerratings.com) to avoid scam artists. Then, you can buy with confidence, save money, and get the camera you really want, too. 

BY NATHAN CHANDLER

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Tips On Buying A Camera

BY ANGIE ZMARZLY

1 Megapixels

Base this number on what you want to do with your prints. To produce high-quality 4- x 6-inch prints, look for 3 to 4MP. For 8 x 10s, 5 or 6MP will serve you better. Wall posters? Better go with 8 to 10MP. Warning: A high megapixel count is a memory and storage vampire, and your friends with dial-up will have trouble downloading the picture files.

2 Zoom In

An optical zoom lens, meaning the camera's lens extends and retracts, is a key feature. Don't confuse this with digital zoom, which simply pre-crops photos to *appear* closer. A 3X to 4X optical zoom is adequate, but for frequent landscape or portrait shooting, 6X or more is ideal.

3 Size It Up

A camera is like a pair of shoes; the cutest can compromise comfort. Handle it at the store to see how it feels before you buy it. If it's too small, buttons and menus may be tricky to operate; too bulky, and you may need a backpack to haul it. Keep in mind, a purse-friendly size reduces some vacation stress.

4 Control Freak

For serious shooting look for cameras with some (or full) manual control, which lets you adjust shutter speed, aperture, or zoom. You can't expect perfect shooting scenarios, and manual controls let you adapt to the unexpected.

5 Batteries

Here, you'll likely have two options: rechargeable AA cells or a rechargeable battery pack. If your camera is out of juice while miles away from an electrical outlet, the AA option lets you substitute disposables. A high-end camera, in other words the fully-loaded crème de la crème, handles about 300 shots a charge.

6 Keep It Steady

Unless you often carry a tripod, consider a camera with an image stabilizer, which compensates for camera, not subject, movement. This high-end feature reduces the blurriness caused by shaky hands or a slow shutter speed.

7 Memory

You don't want to hit your memory's limit at the peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Removable memory media is a must, so avoid models that have only built-in memory. Also, expect to buy an additional memory card, as most cameras only include cards with a 10-picture capacity.


8 Shutterbug

To really do justice to Junior's soccer games this fall, look for a camera with controllable, wide-range shutter speed. Increasing your shutter speed lets you freeze fast-moving subjects, while slowing it down lets you capture high quality images in low light situations—perfect as the sun starts to set.

9 LCD

An LCD of 2 or 3 inches makes for easier viewing. Just remember, a larger screen increases the drain on batteries and could increase the overall weight, making the camera cumbersome to hold while shooting. Look for an antiglare LCD, which makes it easier to see the screen outside.

10 Bells & Whistles

Some bonus features make life easier or just more fun. If you want a camera with the works, we'd recommend in-camera red-eye removal, PictBridge compatibility so you can print without a computer, water resistance, a self-timer, and the ability to capture video. 

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Joel Silver ISF

We welcome Screen Research to an elite group of color scientists who boldly engineer screens with a focus on Home Theater! The folks at Screen Research should be complimented for supplying a screen that has not compromised acoustic transparency or sacrificed visual accuracy for gain – something that is increasingly rare these days.

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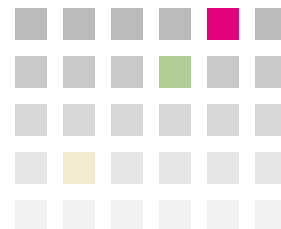
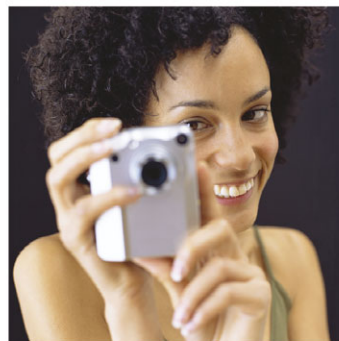
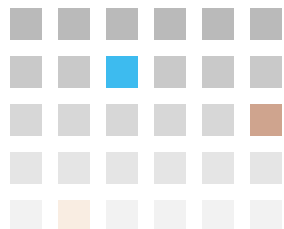
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Your Camera, Your Style

Choose A Digital Camera To Fit Your Life



We all have different needs for our digital cameras. And although you'll want to take into consideration factors such as megapixels, LCD sizes, and optical zoom ranges, there's more to digital cameras than the technical specs. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to present a salesperson with your personal profile and walk away with a camera that's the perfect fit? We can't cover every personality type, but following are three that you may be shopping for and a camera for each of them.

The Mom On The Go

You're a busy mom, and you take lots of pictures . . . everywhere you go. Taking your digital camera with you is a given, so you don't want anything bulky. (You're already carrying enough as it is.) Your camera needs to be slim but tough. It's important to be able to point and shoot at a moment's notice for those priceless candid shots.

The camera. The Nikon Coolpix 7900 (\$399.95; www.nikonusa.com) may be just what you're looking for. Packing 7.1MP and a 3X optical zoom, this camera

is ready to perform, and its slick black aluminum body looks good, too. With its exclusive In-Camera Red-Eye Fix, 16 scene modes, and in-camera cropping, the 7900 is feature-packed but still has ease of use on its side. And at 2.4 x 3.5 x 1.4 inches (HxWxD) and 5.3 ounces, you won't break your back stashing it in your purse.

The Busy Teen

Teenagers are at an interesting crossroads in life: no longer children, yet not quite adults. With the beginning of their passage into the "real world" comes the desire to have toys of their

own, including their own digital cameras. So, you are faced with the chore of finding a camera that'll do what they want without breaking the bank.

The camera. The 4MP Olympus FE-100 (\$149.99; www.olympusamerica.com) is small and relatively inexpensive, so you don't have to worry (too much at least) about how your teen is roughhousing with it. Five shooting modes, QuickTime

movie mode, PictBridge compatibility, and an integrated Help Guide make the FE-100 a good option for beginners.

The Shutterbug

You love photography. You live to capture a personality in a portrait and think it's fun to wait for the right moment to snap a picture of the bee buzzing around your flowerbed. For you, photography is

Unique Finds

Although a basic digital camera might be fine for some, others have specific needs. Here are a few specialty cameras for those who think outside the box.

Dive in. If water's your thing, go waterproof. To take pictures in the pool or on the beach, consider Pentax's OptioWP (\$350; www.pentaximaging.com). Although it looks like any other digital camera, the 5MP OptioWP is waterproof up to 5 feet for 30 minutes.

Print diva. If you head for your scrapbooking corner after every event, you probably don't want to mess with uploading your pictures to an editing

program or getting prints at the local drug store. Kodak makes prints simple with the EasyShare Z740 Digital Camera and Printer Dock Series 3 (\$449.95; www.kodak.com). Just place the 5MP camera on the dock and get prints (4- x 6-inch or smaller) with the touch of a button.

Think mini. There is something to be said for having a camera with you at all times. Now you can with Vivitar's 1.3MP ViviCam 3301. This tiny camera measures 2.2 x 2.1 x 0.8 inches (HxWxD) and weighs less than 2 ounces. Use it as a keychain or keep it in your wallet and never miss an unscripted moment. ●

One For All

So you know you want a digital camera but don't have the time (or desire) to ponder all your options? Consider our pick for a good all-around digital camera for just about anyone.

The Canon PowerShot SD500 (\$500; www.consumer.usa.canon.com) is a compact, simple-to-use 7.1MP camera with 3X optical zoom and a 2-inch LCD. With nine Special Scene Modes and Digital Macro Mode, you'll have plenty of choices, even though the camera doesn't offer manual settings. And like most digital

cameras, the SD500 has a movie mode to capture video clips.


The SD500's Color Custom option is a unique set of features that let you tweak color while taking your pictures. You can lighten or darken skin tones or use more customized settings, such as Color Accent to highlight a single color while turning the rest of your photo black and white. When you're done shooting, you can upload your photos using high-speed USB 2.0 or print directly from any PictBridge-compliant printer. ●



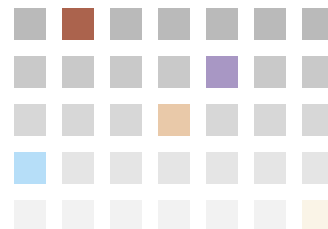
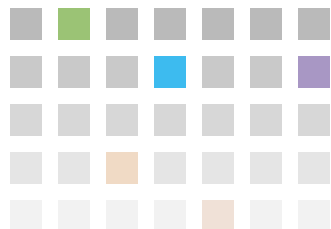
an art form. Manual settings are not an option; they are a necessity. You want lots of megapixels, a powerful optical zoom, and lens options. Although a digital SLR (single-lens reflex) is an obvious choice, there may be some high-end SLR-like cameras that fit the bill, too.

The camera. Samsung's new Digimax Pro815 (\$849; www.samsungcamera.usa.com) might be just what you've been waiting for. At press time, Samsung did not have an official release date for the Pro815, but it was expected to be available this fall. Although it's not an SLR, the Pro815 promises to perform like one. The 8MP Pro815 has a 15X optical zoom and lens technology that lets you shoot wide angle and telephoto pictures without changing lenses. The 3.5-inch LCD is the largest on the market, and you can take up to 500 shots on the battery's charge. Manual options and special-effect and setting modes are sure to please your inner photographer.

Shop On

Whatever your personality, whatever your skill level, there's sure to be a digital camera out there. Now all you have to do is discover what type of photographer you are and start shopping. 

BY JOY MARTIN



When Image Is Everything

Shop For The Best Digital Camera For Your Family

That wheezing sound you hear is coming from counters and kiosks across the land as photographic film breathes its last gasps. The popularity of digital cameras is rapidly turning film into a historical artifact on par with fabric typewriter ribbons.

From instant gratification and immediate feedback to convenience and post-shooting creative options, the digicam fits our current pace of life. But with the endless tide of cameras on the market, how can you be assured of

picking one that's particularly well-suited to your family?

Consider This

A camera isn't a one-size-fits-all product. One user may want pocket portability and total user friendliness. Another won't be happy with anything less than an SLR (single-lens reflex) design, which provides the most creative control options and lets you use a variety of lenses.

Regardless of the size, style, and type of digital camera that you want, there are a few overall aspects to consider in

choosing the camera to bring under your roof.

First, we can't stress it enough: If the camera feels cheap, you may soon regret buying it. Even if you carry it in a protective case (and you should!), it's invariably going to take some knocks. A camera that feels flimsy can be a recipe for disaster around rampaging kids.

Consider size, too. Larger cameras give you plenty to grab onto. If you opt for a compact model, make sure it's designed with well-placed ridges and other surfaces, so it feels secure in your grasp,

even when using it one-handed. A related consideration is weight. If you expect to carry your camera around a lot, and are leaning toward an SLR, be sure you won't mind its extra mass. Several extra ounces are the trade-off for their extra features and solid feel.

Don't forget speed. When your child calls "Watch me," split-seconds count. We all prefer a digicam that responds as quickly as film, beginning with a quick start-up that's preferably less than one second. Most early digicams suffered a delay, called **shutter lag**, between the time you pressed the shutter button and the photo was captured. This forced you to anticipate action shots, sometimes missing them altogether. Shutter lag still plagues some low-end cameras, so look for one that keeps it down to several insignificant milliseconds.

If you want not just action shots but also action sequences, you'll need a burst mode, which lets you click once to snap a rapid-fire series of pictures: four,

five, even six or more. Check the specs. The more pictures the camera can process, and the higher the per-second frame rate, the better.

Finally, what do you want to shoot and from how far away? With an SLR camera, you can exchange wide-angle and telephoto lenses as needed. With a more compact camera, you're stuck with the built-in lens, although some are compatible with accessory attachments to improve basic abilities. A 3X

zoom is common, and equivalent to a 105mm telephoto, but some cameras greatly exceed that.

There are many great cameras available for your family, and here are some of the best, with different highlights that will appeal to different needs.

Canon Digital Rebel XT

\$999

www.canonusa.com

Let The Kids Take Over

Kids have a perspective on life—both figuratively and literally—that's often very different from that of adults. You can learn a lot about what the kids in your life find fascinating by turning the camera over to them, as long as you think they're responsible enough to handle it.

Here are some tips on the basic skills they should know and how to make teaching fun.

Automate the camera. Most young kids aren't going to have the patience to fuss with things like shutter speed, aperture size, and so on. If they're interested, that can come later. For now, show them how to activate the camera's Auto mode, so all they have to do is point-and-shoot.

Paws off the lens. Kids tend to let their grubby prints fall where they may. To stress the importance of keeping the lens clean, cover it with something that's easy to remove, such as a scrap from a Post-It Note, shoot a picture, and show them how it obscures part of the image.

How to focus. Digital cameras usually have an autofocus that's activated by pressing the shutter release halfway. Give your kids several trial runs to get used to the feel of it and point out how the image swims into focus. This will be easier if you're

both watching this on a camera's back-panel display.

Freeze. A moving photographer usually means a blurry photo. To get kids in the habit of holding still while shooting, compare it to a game of "Statue," where you win by not moving.

Turn off the display when it's not in use. That back-panel display drains battery power. Make sure your kids know how to turn it off when they're not using it.

It's cheaper than a PlayStation. Once upon a time, 2MP cameras ruled the earth. Now that millions of us have upgraded to better models, however, the secondhand market is flooded with digicams that have little resale value. For \$20 or so on eBay, you should be able to get your kids their own cameras to experiment with, and they probably won't care about the low resolution.

Take field trips. They have their cameras, you have yours . . . now head out together on a photo safari in the park, a nearby forest, or around the neighborhood. You can provide immediate guidance and after shooting the same subjects, review them at home and discuss why your pictures look better—or vice-versa! ●



Family-Friendly Features: A Checklist

- ☐ Durable
- ☐ Easy to hold
- ☐ No discernable shutter lag
- ☐ Quick startup
- ☐ Burst mode
- ☐ Zoom lens

The original Digital Rebel was the first camera to knock the street price of a digital SLR below the \$1,000 level. The 8MP XT improves upon its forerunner in almost every way, with enhancements to speed, performance, color accuracy, and more, all in a smaller size that has tested very well with women, who find it easier to hold. And because its operational modes range from complete manual control to total automation, it will adapt to the skill levels of everyone in the family.

Kodak EasyShare Z740 Zoom Digital Camera & Printer Dock Series 3

\$449.95 (camera only, \$349.95)
www.kodak.com

If you want a semi-compact camera with a powerful zoom, the 5MP Z740 delivers. Its 10X optical zoom is equivalent to a 350mm telephoto lens, which can put you onstage during a play or into the middle of a soccer field. The bundled printer dock is your home photo lab; it's a base station that will charge the camera, and you can connect it to your computer and crank out prints up to 4 x 6 inches. It also features 32MB of built-in memory, so you'll never need to delay shooting because of a missing memory card.

Nikon D50

\$899.95
www.nikonusa.com

Along with Canon, Nikon brought digital SLRs into the price range of serious amateurs. The 6.1MP D50 sports most of the features that made the D70 one of the industry's biggest sellers among everyone from beginners to semi-professionals. But Nikon remains the champion when it comes to burst mode. Using a high-speed Secure Digital card, the D50 can snap a 137-shot sequence at 2.5fps.

Olympus Stylus 800 Digital

\$449.99
www.olympus.com

and with its TruePic TURBO processor, it feels as fast as an SLR. The Stylus 800 also excels indoors, with its Bright Capture technology delivering quality shots even in low-light situations such as a candle-lit birthday party. It features 32MB of built-in memory.


Sony Cyber-shot DSC-H1

\$499.95
www.sonystyle.com

Sony's entire Cyber-shot line is worth a look for compact point-and-shoot enthusiasts, but the 5.1MP DSC-H1 marks the threshold where you can also start exercising plenty of manual control. It feels like a small SLR, and while it isn't, the attached lens is expandable with optional telephoto and wide-angle



Here's one for the action-oriented family. Not only is the 8MP Stylus 800 sleek enough to ride in all but the tightest pockets, but it also has an all-weather body sealed with rubber gaskets to keep out the elements. For its size, it has a huge display (2.5 inches) that looks sharp even in direct sunlight,

attachments. Although with its 12X optical zoom, you may have all the telephoto power you need. The DSC-H1 also has 32MB of built-in memory. 

BY BRIAN HODGE

**Speakers should be heard, not seen.
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Three speakers integrated into the frame, two surround sound speakers and a subwoofer complete the system.



Introducing the Da-Lite Acoustical Imager

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If You're Looking For...

How To Find The Best Camera For Your Needs



W

Whether you're upgrading your clunky old digital camera or taking your first leap into the brave new world of digital photography, you don't want to step into the fray unarmed. Knowledge, as they say, is power.

Before you set foot in a store or surf your way over to your favorite online outlet, think about who you are and what you really want from your digital camera. Remember the times you've wished you had one: at a birthday party, on top of a mountain, during a snorkeling trip, or when a girlfriend pulled her sleek and shiny new camera out of her purse? Then, make an honest list of your priorities. Looks, price, ease of use, and features should all come into play. Once you feel you know your needs, take a look at our recommendations to find the camera that's the perfect fit for your lifestyle.

BY NAOMI GRAYCHASE

If You're Looking For: A camera so hot you might blush when you hold it.

You'll Need: A slim design, a choice of colors, a pocket-sized body, at least 5MP, MPEG-4-quality movie recording capabilities, and features that'll make flawless shooting a cinch.

Our Recommendation: The Casio Exilim EX-S500, \$399, www.casio.com

Why We Recommend It: This camera has it all—brains, beauty, and a good personality, too. Just over 1/2 inch thick and about the size of a credit card, the 5MP Exilim EX-S500 comes in three colors, records up to one hour of high-quality video with a 1GB SD (Secure Digital) memory card installed, and features state-of-the-art antishake and autofocus features that practically guarantee a perfect photo.

If You're Looking For: A camera you can safely take to the beach, camping, or to a rain-soaked soccer match.

You'll Need: A rugged, portable camera that can withstand everything from heat and cold, to a downpour, or a dip in the pool.

Our Recommendation: Pentax Optio WP, \$350, www.pentax.com

Why We Recommend It: Fully waterproof, lightweight, and able to function at temperatures ranging from freezing to 104 degrees, you can fearlessly take this 5MP 3X optical zoom camera anywhere—even snorkeling. Added bonus: It features a 2-inch LCD and 0.05-second shutter release time lag.

If You're Looking For: A camera to carry around with you on a daily basis.

You'll Need: Something lightweight and easy to use (with a sturdy but not stocky build), at least 5MP, easy photo transfer, and at least 3X optical zoom.

Our Recommendation: The Kodak EasyShare V550, \$399, www.kodak.com

Why We Recommend It: The V-series of EasyShare cameras combines the ease-of-use the line is known for with a durable, modern-looking case, roughly the size of a deck of playing cards. It turns videos into stop-action still pictures, and it features a 2.5-inch high-resolution LCD, 3X zoom, and 5MP.

If You're Looking For: An affordable camera even your dog could probably use.

You'll Need: Clear and simple menus, a camera you can point and shoot, a decent-sized LCD, 4MP or better, and at least 2X optical zoom.

Our Recommendation: Kodak EasyShare LS743, \$249.95, www.kodak.com

Why We Recommend It: This camera is our favorite for newbies. It's nice to look at, comfortable to hold, has a 4MP image resolution, and a 2.8X optical zoom, along with just enough features served up in a straightforward menu system to make it perfect for point-and-shooters. If you can take snapshots with a traditional camera, you can take them with the LS743.

If You're Looking For: The ability to zoom in on a graduate from the back of a gymnasium, an athlete from the nosebleed seats, or a whale tail off the starboard bow.

You'll Need: 12X optical zoom, 5MP, manual and automatic focus, a good-sized LCD, and good image stabilizer capabilities.

Our Recommendation: Canon PowerShot S2 IS, \$499, www.canon.com

Why We Recommend It: Although it's a little heavier (4.1 ounces) than some of its competition, the PowerShot S2 IS provides powerful 12X optical zoom capabilities, a 1.8-inch Vari-Angle LCD, which conveniently extends and rotates, 5MP, and an excellent feature set.

If You're Looking For: A camera that you'll use primarily to publish photos to the Web—for your eBay store, Web site, or for electronic sharing with your family and friends.

You'll Need: 3MP or better image resolution, 2X optical zoom; JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) file format; an interface, such as USB, that is compatible with your computer; a fast file transfer rate; and easy-to-use software.

Our Recommendation: Canon PowerShot A520, \$249, www.canon.com

Why We Recommend It: A low-cost option with 4MP, a 1.8-inch LCD, 4X optical zoom, crisp image quality, and easy printing and sharing.

If You're Looking For: A camera to backpack through Europe, hike the Appalachian trail, or take on a safari.

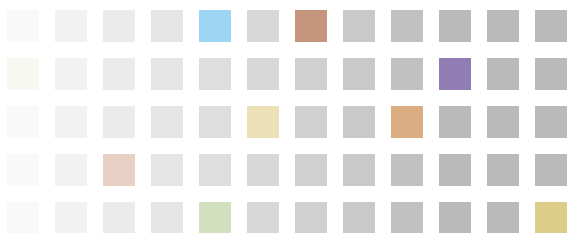
You'll Need: A rugged, compact camera that's easy to carry, can take a range of pictures from brightly lit panoramics to nighttime close-ups, and that isn't so expensive that you'll be brokenhearted if it's lost, damaged, or stolen. (Of course, losing your pictures can be an even greater blow than losing your camera, so to be safe, take along several memory cards to minimize your losses.)

Our Recommendation: Olympus Stylus 500, \$399.99, www.olympusamerica.com

Why We Recommend It: The 2.5-inch display makes it easier to determine which images to keep and which to delete because, when traveling, space—even digital space—is at a premium. This full-featured 5MP camera features 3X optical zoom and an all-weather metal casing designed to protect it from water damage. It's an excellent travel camera that costs at least \$50 less than most of its peers.

'Tis The Season

The Best Digital Camera For Everyone On Your List



Every year, as December approaches, the quest to find the perfect gift for everyone on our lists makes us wish for our own personal army of elves. Among the most coveted gifts this season will be a new crop of digital cameras. Manufacturers are keeping pace with demand and trotting out a whole series of sleeker, smaller, higher-resolution, more fully featured cameras, which will be sure to make the faces of your loved ones light up like a Christmas tree. But sorting through them all to find just the right one for your mother in Malibu or your sister in Sarasota can leave you feeling that those chestnuts roasting over an open fire really have it *easy*.

To help you find the right gifts, we've put together this list—and don't worry; we checked it twice. Whether you give gifts at the solstice, for Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, or Christmas, now it's up to you to decide who's naughty and who's nice enough to unwrap a shiny new camera.

Your brother, the traveler. For your tech-savvy and adventurous brother, we suggest the Olympus Stylus Verve S (\$299.99; www.olympusamerica.com).



Because of its all-weather construction, he'll be able to fearlessly toss it in a backpack before any sort of trip, and its compact design means he'll be able to shoot photos with one hand while gripping a rocky outcropping with the other. With 5MP resolution, 1.8-inch LCD, and an 8X optical zoom, it'll serve his need to preserve the incredible views he experiences. (Plus, it looks *really* cool.)

Cousin Annie and the twins. For a busy mom who can hold her own with the

latest technology, but who has discovered that simplicity is the key to happiness (and survival) with toddler twins, the Kodak EasyShare line is the answer. We recommend the V550 (\$399.95; www.kodak.com), which is the smallest EasyShare yet (it's about the size of a deck of cards) but still offers an impressive 2.5-inch LCD. If she doesn't want to sacrifice style in her quest for practicality, she'll be pleased to discover that the EasyShare's V-series design has a modern look and comes in two colors

(black and silver). Capturing the toddlers in action will be a snap because the V550 (and the V530, which costs \$50 less) can record TV-quality video with sound for up to 80 minutes, depending on the capacity of your memory card. New to this line is the ability to turn video into stop-action still pictures that she can print or share electronically. The built-in image stabilization, exceptional zoom features, and simple-to-navigate menus make this 5MP camera a sure bet for busy moms on the go.

Your sister, the sexy sophisticate. If your sister would fit right in among Sarah Jessica Parker's gal pals in the cast of "Sex and the City," The Nikon Coolpix S1 (\$379.95; www.nikonimaging.com) is the perfect gift for her—tastefully gift-wrapped, of course. When it was released this spring, the S1 was the smallest Nikon digicam to date. The look and feel of this little camera is just right for a city girl—it comes in three colors (black, silver, and white), and its shape and size are reminiscent of one of her favorite things: a credit card. The 5.1MP S1 offers a variety of cutting-edge features, including Nikon's built-in D-Lighting software, a 2.5-inch LCD, and a range of shooting modes, which make taking glamorous photos relatively

Our Favorite Accessory


These days, keeping photos in your wallet is almost as retro as listening to vinyl. Photography is rapidly going digital—which means photo albums are, too. If last year you gave grandma a digital camera, this season give her a digital brag book, such as the Kodak EasyShare Picture Viewer (\$149). Slim, lightweight, and pocket-sized, it can store up to 150 images at a time and display them for up to three continuous hours on a 2.5-inch screen.

The EasyShare is compatible with the Kodak EasyShare Printer Dock Series 3 and is also PictBridge compatible, so with the right printer (such as the Canon CP-200, \$189.95), you can take PCs out of the loop. For those who travel, the Picture Viewer can also be a handy place to safely store each day's vacation photos to help free memory cards and protect your images in case your camera gets lost, damaged, or stolen. ●

simple. Fair warning, though: Women with long nails will have difficulty pushing the buttons required to take advantage of some features.

Your dad, the shutterbug. For your father, an ultra-slim camera might *seem* like a great idea, but unless he's petite in stature, it's likely he'll be happier with a camera that will actually fit in his hands. The trend in digicams is "smaller is better"—which is good news for many of us—but for people who feel awkward taking a picture with something the size of a deck of playing cards, there are some better options. Among them is the Canon PowerShot S2 IS (\$499.95;

www.usa.canon.com). This 5MP camera is relatively lightweight for its size and offers superb zoom (12X optical/4X digital) and other features. We love the 1.8-inch rotating Vari-Angle LCD and the Night Display function for clearer viewing of subjects in low-light conditions. And if Dad loves to geek out on accessories, he'll find a satisfying number of lenses, flashes, and others available. (Now you know what you can get him for Father's Day, too.)

Your niece, the teenager. For the image-conscious younger set that's no stranger to technology, we recommend the sleekly designed Casio Exilim EX-Z57 (\$349.99, www.casio.com). It's slightly thicker than its sexy sister, the S500 (\$399), but offers a 2.7-inch LCD and more readily available menus, so your niece's patience won't be tried as she attempts to access all her cool features. This 5MP camera offers 3X optical zoom, antishake technology, and the ability to take high-quality MPEG-4 movies. The long-lasting battery can shoot 200 photos before needing to recharge, and a mere 0.008-second release time lag will satisfy the all-important instant-gratification factor for teens. 

BY NAOMI GRAYCHASE



Editor's Top 10

Reasons I Love These Devices

Smile and say cheese! It's no secret that digital cameras are *CE Lifestyles* editor Katie Sommer's favorite type of CE device. Here's why.

If you invest in a **hefty media card** for your digital camera, you can basically **take as many pictures as you want** without worrying about running out of film.

Digital cameras let you **share photos via email**, which can help close that **1,500-mile gap** between you and your baby niece.

What else lets you instantly turn your **backyard's fall leaves** into frameable works of art?

If you're **pushing the envelope** with your camera's file storage, many digital cameras have **large, crystal-clear LCDs** that let you instantly decide whether you want to keep the photo.



Cameras can be **tiny** but **powerful**. If you want an original souvenir from New York City, but you also want to keep your gear light, you can easily whip a digital camera out of your pocket and take an amazing picture of Grand Central Station.

Your digital photo files are a lot easier to **store and organize** than paper photos. Just burn them to a CD, label it, and put it into a jewel case.

Bundled or third-party photo-editing software can be used for simple tasks such as **re-moving red-eye**, but it can also make your snapshots into truly **spectacular works of art**.

Photos are **much easier to share** and enjoy than camcorder footage; just stick the photos in an album and bring it with you to your next **sisters' lunch**.

Today's digital cameras are so small that they are **no longer uncomfortable** to carry around for long periods of time, such as during your tour of the Louvre.

Digital cameras are one type of CE device **kids can use as easily** and effectively as adults.

On such a nice day,
don't you want to go outside and play?



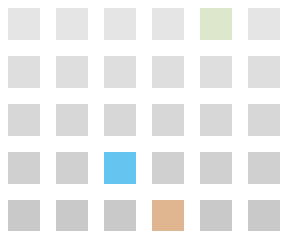
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Tips

Have Fun With Digital Cameras



Preserve Special Memories

Use your digital camera to create valuable gifts for loved ones during special times in their lives. If you know someone who is expecting a child, take photos of her each week or month during her pregnancy and then make her a priceless keepsake book. Or, create a beautiful photo album for a bride to be. Capture the moments that are often overlooked but are cherished memories of a bride's big day, such as her getting a manicure, getting her hair styled, and her mother buttoning her wedding gown before saying "I do." You can also use your digital pictures to make photo collages for your daughter's Sweet 16 or your son's high school graduation.

Before & After

If you are working on a special project, snap several photos to track its stages. Take before-and-after pictures of long-term projects, such as remodeling, re-decorating, or building your own home, so you can look back at all the hard work you did throughout the process.

Then email those photos to your out-of-state relatives and friends to showcase your progress.

Record Casual Outings

Turn everyday outings into magnificent photo packages. Sure, you always take your camera to special events, but don't forget that everyday occurrences can make great photos, too. Take pictures of your family spending time outdoors, your children visiting Grandma's house, or a girls' day of shopping at the mall. Then, take those photos and turn them into photo packages, perhaps in an album or scrapbook, and title them accordingly, such as "Fall Festivities," "To Grandma's House We Go," or "Shop 'Til You Drop."


Pet Portfolios

Show off your creative side by making a portfolio of a gal's best friend: your pet. Capture digital photos that show off your pets' personalities. Sneak up on Fido while he lounges around the house or catch your cat as she conveniently positions herself next to the fish bowl.



Choose the best shots and create a portrait collage for your wall or a portfolio to pass around at the next social gathering at your home.

Do-It-Yourself Holiday Greetings

With the holidays approaching, it's perfect timing to use your camera to make beautiful holiday creations. This year, use your digital camera to make your own holiday greeting cards. Ask a friend or a neighbor to assist you in taking a photo of you with your family or a pet in a holiday setting, such as a snow-covered fir tree or near your menorah. Then use those shots to create holiday wishes to send to your friends and relatives. If you have access to photo-editing software and a quality printer, you can spice up the picture with text or special effects or print traditional greeting cards yourself. If you can't print the photos from home, take your memory card to a photo kiosk to make holiday greetings with a fun border or message to go with it. 

BY LINNÉ OURADA

Digital Photo Project: Photo Tray

Each month we'll explain how to create something fun, stylish, and useful with your favorite photos and some easy-to-find craft supplies. Make the project for your own home or give it as a gift to a friend or family member; either way, it will be a cool and original way to display your pictures. This month's project: a photo tray.



Supplies:

- ❖ Spray paint
- ❖ Unfinished wooden serving tray
- ❖ Decoupage
- ❖ Paintbrush or paint sponge
- ❖ Spray-on sealant
- ❖ Copies of any photos you want to display on your tray
- ❖ OPTIONAL: Any decorative paint or accents

First, because our photos are vintage and developed from film, we scanned them at 600dpi and printed them with a high-quality printer on normal office paper. (We liked the look of black-and-white photos for this project, but you can certainly use color photos, as well.) If your photos were taken on a digital camera, you can either print them at home or take them to a printer. Then carefully cut the photos out.

Next, paint your tray with spray paint. You could also use a non-acrylic wood stain, if that's a look you like. (Follow the directions on the can.) Let your tray dry thoroughly.

Decide where your photos will go on the tray. When you find a layout you like, make light pencil marks at the corners, so you can place the photos there permanently with the decoupage. Alternatively, you could make a collage with your photos and just decide on the photo placement as you go.

After that, use the brush to apply decoupage to both the area on the tray on which the photos will go and the back of the photos. (Do this one photo at a time and one area at a time because the glue dries quickly.) Carefully place each photo on the correct spot on the tray and smooth out any air bubbles that



might have formed under the paper. Brush decoupage over each photo after you've glued it to your tray.

When all your photos are attached to the tray, brush decoupage over the entire area again and let it dry.

OPTIONAL: Use paint or other decorative elements to accent your tray. We used gold paint to frame our group of photos.

Seal the tray with a spray-on sealant (two or three coats is ideal) and let it dry completely.

Finally, use it! This tray is a great conversation starter at parties. Thanksgiving dinner is the perfect opportunity to show it off to friends and family when you use it to pass out glasses of wine. It's also extremely functional year-round for those of us with ottoman coffee tables; you'll get a flat, steady surface for coffee mugs, and you also get a creative display medium for your favorite photos. **CE**

BY KATIE SOMMER

Spray paint: \$3.50	Photo copies: 25 cents
Wooden tray: \$8	Spray-on sealant:
Sponge brushes: \$1	\$4.79
Decoupage: \$4.79	Gold paint: \$3

Total cost of project: **\$25.33**

Holiday Photo Ops

Snag Unforgettable Photos
In Snow, Cold & Darkness



The holiday season is so busy for many people that it's virtually a blur; fortunately, digital cameras make capturing sharp and dramatic images easier than ever. So even if your head spins from the chaos of the season, there are still plenty of ways to make sure you take memorable images during the holidays.

Take advantage of many holiday photo opportunities before the hectic season slips away. You'll find plenty of scenic settings outdoors.

Brilliant fall leaves make perfect backgrounds for family photos, but you have to take advantage of those colors before strong winds blow them to the ground. Beat the wind to create colorful portraits and landscapes.

Late fall is harvest time, and it's the perfect chance to capture images of children and grown-ups alike delighting in the season's bounty. Take a day trip to an orchard or cruise through the countryside, and you'll encounter more perfect photo subjects than you can count.

And of course, snow scenes make for perfect subjects, too. Wet snow clinging to bare trees accentuates landscape shots. Send the kids outdoors and get a few action shots of their snowball fights, too.

The problem with shooting outside is that poor weather often threatens, especially during winter. Don't give up



when it rains or snows—instead, prepare yourself and your camera for inclement conditions and for all of those splendid photo opportunities, too.

Condensation is a problem photographers face during cold months. When your camera becomes frigid and you move it to a warmer environment, such as an inner coat pocket or your car, the temperature change may cause droplets to form temporarily on your camera's internal components and lens. To prevent this, place your cold camera in an airtight baggie before taking it indoors and let it warm to room temperature.

If it's cold enough that your glasses fog up or form condensation when you go inside, your camera will experience the same problem. If condensation develops on your lens, open the camera's compartments and let it air dry for a day in a dry room before you use it again.


Hardy & helpful products. Rain, sleet, and snow pose risks to your camera, too. For a couple of quick snapshots, grab a plastic grocery bag, tear a hole large enough for your lens, and cover the rest of your camera to provide temporary protection.

A plastic bag won't cut it if you plan to stay outside for a while; you need a camera designed to withstand the elements. Olympus makes a number of cameras, such as the Stylus 800 Digital (\$449.99; www.olympusamerica.com), which protects its 2.5-inch color monitor and 8MP image sensor with a case designed to resist water, dust, and other hazards.

You can take things a step further by investing in a waterproof case that clamps around your camera. Canon makes numerous cases, such as its All Weather Case (\$149; #AW-DC30; www.powershot.com), that hold certain PowerShot models. Just like that, your camera is waterproof to a depth of nearly 10 feet, meaning you can use your camera during a snorkeling expedition or for shooting in a downpour. The PowerShot SD400 (\$399.99; www.powershot.com), is a 5MP model that's less than an inch thick and fits snugly inside the AW-DC30.

Digital technology's immediacy means that once you're done tromping in the snow, you can immediately create keepsakes. All you need is a fast inkjet printer, such as Canon's PIXMA i4200 (\$129.99), which creates borderless 4 x 6 prints in less than one minute. You can connect any PictBridge-compatible camera directly to the printer for quick prints, and because this model has a second paper tray, you can keep both photo and plain paper loaded at all times.

Holidays Unwrapped

Once the holidays wind down, don't make your friends and family wait to see your images. Upload your photos to photo-sharing sites such as Buzznet (www.buzznet.com) or Flickr (www.flickr.com) that offer free accounts to help you share your image collection right away. Then, loved ones can enjoy the holiday moments you worked so hard to preserve. 

BY NATHAN CHANDLER

Tell The Whole Holiday Story

Each holiday offers specific photo opportunities you won't want to miss. To capture unforgettable shots, ponder the activities and events that make each holiday special and then try to create images that best preserve the spirit of the moment.

THANKSGIVING



Before the family digs into the annual feast, take a few shots of your relatives gathered around the dinner table. If you dine by candlelight, turn off your flash and flip on one or two of the dining room lights to capture a natural-looking scene.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas lights also make for great photos. Use a tripod to steady your camera and consider shooting at twilight instead of late at night, so there's some ambient light in the sky to help you capture detail in the objects around the colorful lights.



HANUKKAH



It's the Festival Of Lights, so don't overwhelm your subjects with flash. Instead, use a tripod, and if your camera lets you adjust the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) sensitivity, use the lowest number setting (such as 50 or 100) to reduce graininess.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

When you head out on the town with your friends, take your compact digital camera and use the flash to capture the color and excitement of the night. Avoid smoky areas where airborne particles create a haze in your images (and pose a danger to your camera's sensitive internal parts).



Know How

One Problem, Three Solutions

BY BRIAN HODGE

Digital photography is certainly convenient, but it frequently fails to capture imagery with the same sharpness as film. Also, if you scan a print into your computer, the process may introduce some fuzziness to the picture's details.

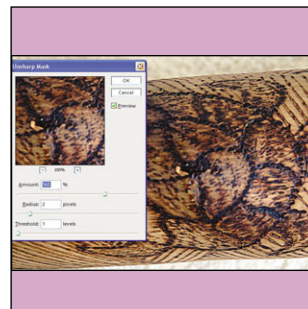
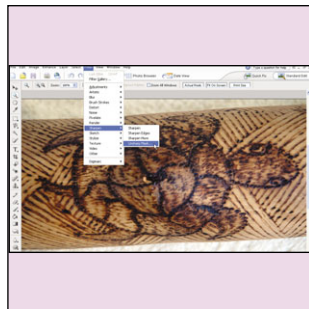
Our photo editors can help restore visual crispness. You may have already

tried this with their Sharpen commands, but you'll get more controllable results using the paradoxically named Unsharp Mask. In a nutshell, it layers the original photo with a soft-focus negative copy that increases the contrast along the image's edge lines.

Sharpening should always be the last thing you do. It can't fix imagery that's badly out of focus, and the results should be subtle, so they may not be as noticeable in our pictures as they will be on your screen. You'll normally want sharpening to look natural; however, sometimes overdoing it can be creative abuse, and you may find the result appealing even if it no longer looks natural.

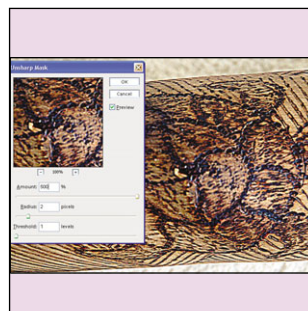
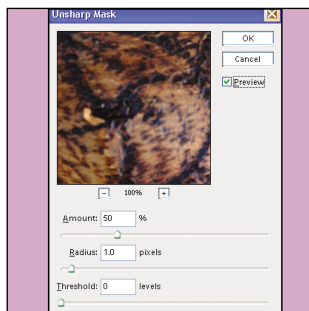
Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0

Open your photo and use the Zoom tool to set your view to 100%, which will give you the most accurate look at sharpening results. Then click the Filter menu, open the Sharpen submenu, and choose Unsharp Mask.



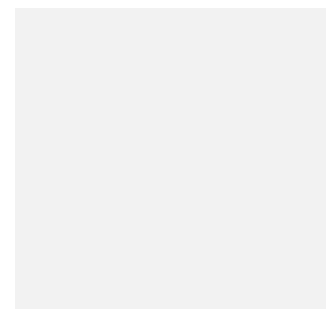
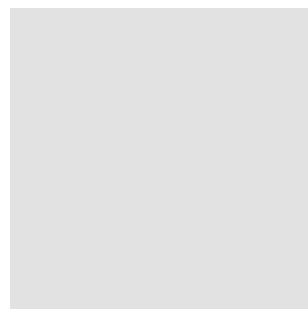
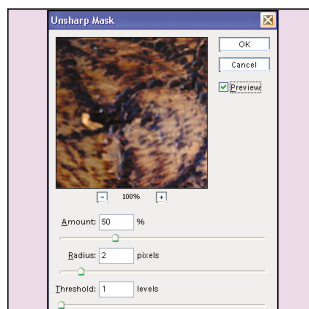
Drag the Amount slider until you get the results you want without overdoing it. For most photos, a value between 100 and 200 will suffice. With the Preview box checked, you'll see the results on the photo, in addition to the preview pane. To assess the change in the photo, toggle Preview on and off.

Amount sets the sharpening strength, Radius determines the width of the sharpened edge, and Threshold specifies how different adjacent pixels in the edge line must be to be affected by sharpening. The lower the Threshold, the greater the number of pixels that are affected.



Overdoing the sharpness gives this image an unnatural glare that's annoying and aesthetically useless.

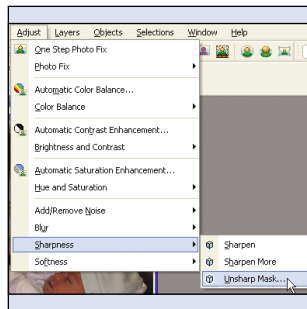
A good formula to begin with is to leave the Threshold extremely low, on 0 or 1. Then divide your photo's resolution by 150 and use that figure for the Radius. Our sample photo is at 300 pixels per inch, so $300 \div 150 = 2$.



Jasc Paint Shop Pro 9

1

Click the Adjust menu, open the Sharpness submenu, and choose Unsharp Mask.



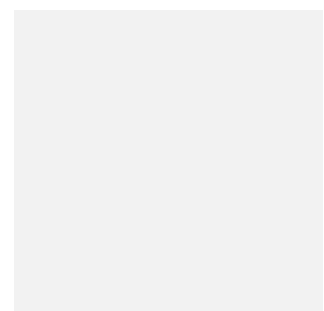
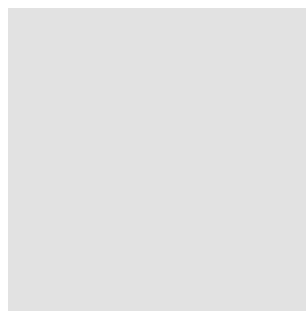
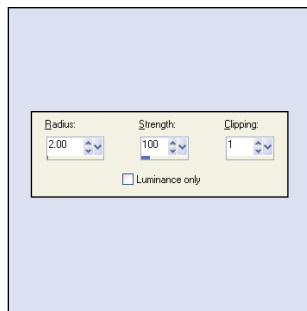
Experiment with the Strength slider. Again, between 100 and 200 is a good zone to explore at first.

So you can see more of the photo in the Before and After preview panes (which should already be at 100%), drag the lower corner of the dialog box to enlarge it or click the Maximize button. You can also drag inside either of the preview panes to pan toward a particular area of the photo.



In this case, going overboard leaves the photo looking like a Norman Rockwell painting.

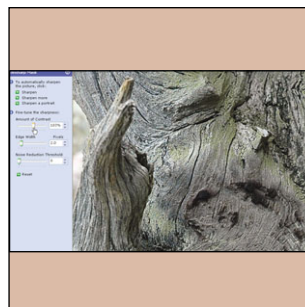
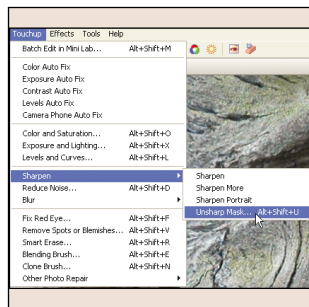
The controls are the same as in Photoshop Elements, but here Threshold is called Clipping. Set it to 0 or 1. Then use the same formula as in Step 3 of the Photoshop Elements' tutorial to determine the Radius. This sample photo also has a resolution of 300 pixels per inch, so we'll set the Radius to 2.



Microsoft Digital Image Pro 10

1

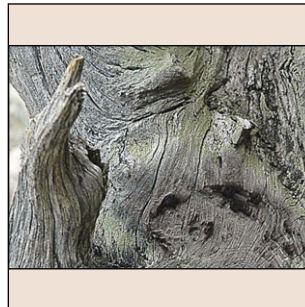
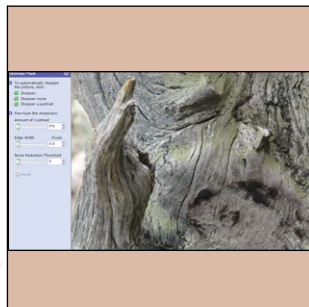
Open your photo and use the Zoom slider to set your view to 100%. Click the Touchup menu, open the Sharpen submenu, and select Unsharp Mask.



Experiment with the Amount Of Contrast slider. DIP seems to have a more pronounced effect sooner, so use 50 as your low end. Unfortunately, the program provides no way of toggling the effect on and off to judge your progress against the original, so you'll have to keep dragging the slider to 0.

2

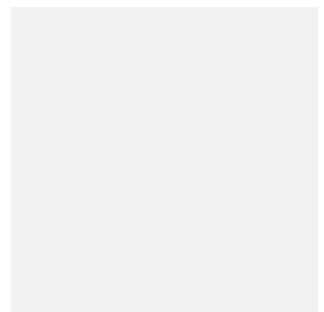
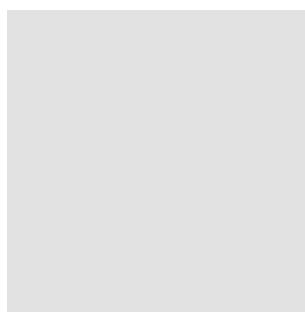
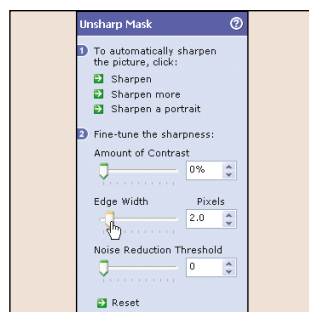
Under Step 1 in the Instruction Panel, you can select one of three presets to get started. Try it if you wish, but using our formula-based method from above, you can safely ignore the presets and jump straight to the sliders.



5

Here, overkill gives the wood a whitish appearance that is on the verge of a metallic look.

The three controls are the same as in our other editors, with slightly different names. Edge Width is the same as Radius, so use our formula to determine the number. Our photo has a resolution of 300 pixels per inch, so we'll set Edge Width to 2. We'll leave the Noise Reduction Threshold on 0.





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Flirting With Disaster

Keep Your Portable Electronic Devices Protected



Aris Mitropoulos knows pain. Other people's pain. As the Group Marketing Manager for RhinoSkin, a manufacturer of protective cases for electronic gadgets, he's been privy to more than a few horror stories about the ways people have neglected and abused their gear into an early grave.

There's the older gentleman from Canada, visiting family in New York, whose entire life-on-the-go was stored in his PDA. In an absent-minded moment, he tucked it into his back pocket. The next time he sat down, the poor device, in its grieving owner's words, "exploded."

Then there's the panic-stricken fellow who came sprinting back into an electronics store, notebook PC in hand, not even five minutes after having picked it up from a repair job. Why? He'd set it on his car's roof, got distracted by securing something in the back seat, and started to drive away, sending the computer on a brutal trip to the asphalt.

Yes, we live in perilous times. To communicate, create, produce results, track data, and enjoy our occasional downtime, we employ gadgets containing fragile components, which we then subject to a daily pace that often leaves them vulnerable to harm.

A protective case can shield our portable, little gadgets from the inevitable bumps and bangs of our high-speed routines. At the very least, they'll provide peace of mind. And if disaster strikes, a case just might save you hundreds of dollars in damage and the loss of your irreplaceable data.

Here are five leading manufacturers whose cases may save your day.

Lowepro

www.lowepro.com

Lowepro offers many cases and sleeves for computers, PDAs, cell phones, and CD players, but for more than 30 years its primary specialty has been imaging equipment. No matter what the size of your compact camera, film or digital SLR, or video camera, you should be able to find a pouch, soft-shell bag, or hard-shell case that fits it to a T.

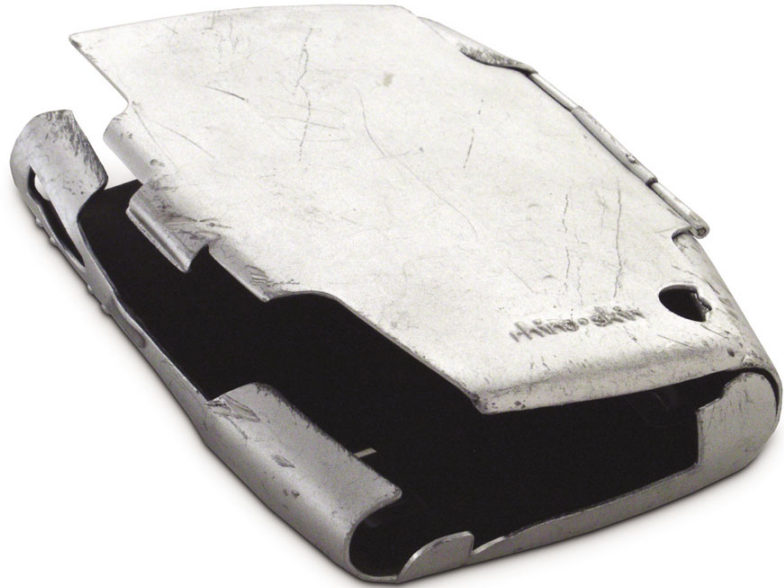
Compact digital camera owners should check out the Rezo 15 pouch (\$17.95), designed with stretchy sides to fit popular models from several manufacturers.

RhinoSkin

www.rhinoskin.com

Although RhinoSkin offers several cases made of flexible material, such as leather and silicone rubber, the company's main strength is hardshell cases made of aluminum and titanium, with padded, shock absorbing interiors. RhinoSkin designs these to fit several popular lines of pocket-sized devices: PDAs, cell phones, Zen Micro and iPod mini music players, and, for the rough-and-tumble kid in your life, Sony's Game Boy.

In the "To The Rescue" sidebar, you can see how well RhinoSkin's titanium case (\$79.95) for Dell's Axim X50 stands up to a true torture test.



This RhinoSkin case hit the highway at 40mph and was promptly run over by a truck, but the PDA housed inside was unharmed.

To The Rescue

There are a lot of gruesome stories out there about the harm that can befall unprotected devices. But take heart—happy endings abound, too. Here's a sample:

Like our fellow whose notebook PC met the parking lot the hard way, Joshua La Fond set his Dell Axim PDA (wearing a RhinoSkin hard-shell case) on his car roof longer than he intended to. However, La Fond actually drove a mile before it tumbled off. Not only did his PDA hit the pavement at 40mph; it was then run over by a Ford

pickup. The RhinoSkin case came out worse for the wear, but the PDA emerged unscathed.

When construction company safety director Dino Sideris' PDA slipped from his pocket while he was up on the scaffolding at a job site, it took a bouncing three-story plunge onto concrete. The sum total of the damage: a minor ding on the RhinoSkin case.

If, while you were boating, high winds snatched eight 1GB CompactFlash cards and dumped them into Lake Michigan, you'd probably give everything

up for lost. Professional photographer Rob Westrich sure did. After a few days, however, someone found his RoadWired FlashFolio washed up on shore and returned it to him . . . with all the cards in perfect working order.

On the same day J.P. got his RoadWired MegaMedia bag, he transferred his notebook computer into it, stowed it in the trunk of his compact car . . . and was promptly rear-ended by a pick-up truck. He wrote to thank RoadWired using the same laptop. ●

Manage Mishaps

Too many mishaps occur for no better reason than owner carelessness. Our minds are a million miles away, and we're just not in the moment. When accidents are the fault of our own inattentiveness, though, they're also easy to prevent. By making an effort to be more mindful about what you're doing, your electronics have a far greater chance of making it to the end of the day unscathed.

The car roof is better for transporting bikes and skis. After our anecdotes about the perils of leaving gadgets on car roofs, need we say more? It only takes a second to double-check that your roof is clear for takeoff.

Higher elevations can save you, too. Do you have young children around? Whenever you leave a device unattended, even for a few

moments, set it high enough that it's out of reach. You just may save it from an experimental juice bath or some other dire fate.

No baking allowed. Digital cameras, camcorders, and many other devices are vulnerable to damage from extreme heat. A closed car on a hot, sunny day can reach oven-like temperatures in less than half an hour. Take your gear with you rather than locking it inside, or at least store it in the trunk if you won't be too long. If you have no choice but to keep it out in direct sunlight for a while, drape it with a light-colored cloth.

No cold shoulder, either. Electronics can also be sensitive to the opposite extremes in temperature. While out in cold weather, tuck your device inside your coat so your body heat keeps it warm. If

something has been exposed to prolonged cold—particularly any device that has a hard drive—let it warm up to room temperature before turning it on.

Dry it out. Another risk from cold, and sometimes just chilly humidity, is condensation. If your device's screen looks fogged, immediately remove the battery and memory chips, and leave these compartments open while the unit dries.

Hip check. If you sling your cell phone, PDA, or some other device from your belt or a purse strap, you may wear it on the side, in such a way that it protrudes far enough to smack into countertops, doorways, and other obstacles. Make sure you keep it in a well-padded sleeve and wear it closer to the front. ●

smaller items. The MegaMedia Bag (\$179.95) has a whopping 36 compartments and pockets, for practically every gadget you might use during the day.

Timbuk2

www.timbuk2.com


Timbuk2 first made its reputation supplying high-quality bags for West Coast messengers, but you don't have to spend your days zipping around San Francisco on a bicycle to appreciate the company's goods.

In addition to a range of all-purpose bags and backpacks (some of which have wide reflector stripes for nighttime safety), Timbuk2 also has an extensive line of padded computer cases, DJ hip packs for music players and accessories, and sleeves tailored for iPods, palmOne Treos, and cell phones. There are also lines of general cases and pouches for small cameras, PDAs, and anything else you want protected by tough ballistic nylon.

For lifestyle protection in vivid colors, consider the Marina Handbag (\$60) and the Marina Computer Handbag (\$80), both of which feature nonslip shoulder straps.

Vanguard USA

www.vanguardusa.com

Vanguard concentrates on the larger end of the scale, with extensive lines of cases for notebook computers and camera and video equipment. Cases come in several types of material, including polyester, polypropylene, and, for the highest protection, airplane grade aluminum (the Milano series, starting at approximately \$70), so you should have no trouble finding a case to match your daily level of threat. 

RoadWired

www.roadwired.com

We're stumped to come up with any device for which RoadWired doesn't have some type of case. Whether you're lugging around a notebook computer, cell phone, PDA, digital camera, or even a GPS (global positioning system) device, RoadWired probably has something that will comfortably contain and protect it.

In case you can't find something form-fitting, or want something versatile enough to use with gadgets of different dimensions, you can turn to its R.A.P.S.: shock-absorbent, weather-resistant, foam-lined wrappings that come in small, medium, and large sizes.

Our favorites, however, are the cases designed for the truly gadget-crazy among us. With 20 compartments, the Podzilla (\$69.95) is designed to hold one primary device and a pile of accessories and

BY BRIAN HODGE

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a HomeWorks® total lighting
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Actual size:
Custom engraved seeTouch® wall
control in Satin Colors™ stone.



 **LUTRON**
Lutron controls your light.™

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tips

Preserve Your Photos Properly

1

Back Up Your Digital Photos

If you frequently take photographs of your family, friends, activities, or special events, back up your digital shots often. Set monthly reminders in your computer's organizer or personal calendar so you remember to back up your work from your hard drive onto long-lasting media such as Photo CDs or DVDs. Your kids and grandchildren will appreciate your forethought.

2

Make Photos Accessible

While some people save backup copies of their digital photos, few have an alternative should those backups be lost. One convenient, free way to back up your pictures is to upload them to an online photo site, many of which offer unlimited uploads and storage. Sites to explore include Shutterfly (www.shutterfly.com), HP's Snapfish (www.snapfish.com), and Kodak's EasyShare Gallery (www.kodakgallery.com). Google's free Picasa 2 (picasa.google.com) will help you organize your photos, as well as back them up. You'll be able to access your photos from any Web-connected computer with the added benefit that friends and family can access cherished photos, as well.

3

Heirloom Photos

Have family heirloom photos you would like to preserve? Start by scanning your aging prints and adding them to your digital library or creating a CD to share with other members of your family. Try to handle the original photos as little as possible, as natural oils from your hands will break down the prints. Store your photos in acid-free boxes (many boxes designed for photo storage are acid-free) or display them in acid-free mounts. If you'd like to hang a favorite old picture of your great-grandmother on the wall, use ultraviolet screening glass to protect it from sunlight. For extra help preserving heirloom photos, look for a professional photo archivist in your area to have the photos copied and reprinted.

4

Buy An Album

Half of the fun of great pictures is enjoying them organized in an album. Choose albums that won't degrade your pictures with time. Magnetic albums with sticky adhesive backing often give off gases that will turn your photos yellow; you may also find your pictures permanently bonded to the adhesive surface! Pocket albums are usually a safe alternative if the pockets are made from Mylar plastic. Pockets made from polyvinyl chloride will fade and discolor photos over time. For other types of albums, make sure the paper is acid-free, as well as the pens and pencils you use to document your photos.

5

Choose Printers Wisely

As the popularity of printing digital pictures at home continues to grow, manufacturers are constantly developing more efficient and longer-lasting printers and ink for photos. A dye-sublimation printer will coat your prints with ultraviolet protection to keep fading to a minimum. Another way to add years of life to your prints is to use the same brand of photo paper as your printer and ink. Also, research your printer and ink choices before you buy a photo printer, as prints made from one manufacturer's printer and ink may last years longer than photos printed from another's products.



BY SARIE WHITSON

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Audio

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No smoke, no mirrors – just 100% digital technology only from ZON. "For sheer wow factor, ZON is the winner" according to *Sound & Vision* (January 2005). "... the sound quality was excellent, and being able to handle digital signals from your sources puts ZON in a class by itself." Also unique to ZON are the easy to use Euro-styled in-wall amplified controllers (providing 60 Watts into 8 Ohms) and the ability to use the latest optical and coax digital audio components, and even old school analog audio (converted to digital by ZON). ZON elevates multi-room audio to new levels of perfection – it's like having live performers all around your house.



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Gift Of The Month

TuneCast II Mobile FM Transmitter



With a portable music player at your side, you have become accustomed to hearing your music whenever you want. You can sing along while you're walking, bob your head at work, and tap your toes while doing daily tasks. But popping in earbuds when you're driving isn't exactly the safest way to enjoy your music. Now there's a better way to indulge while zipping along the Interstate.

If you know anyone with travel plans this holiday season, consider November's Gift Of The Month. Each month we'll feature a consumer electronics device or accessory for less than \$50 that's perfect for the season. This month's gift will make a

perfect traveling companion for holiday road trips. Belkin's TuneCast II Mobile FM Transmitter (www.belkin.com) lets you listen to your portable music player using any FM stereo receiver—meaning you can enjoy your iPod's playlist through your car's stereo system.

In fact, the TuneCast II is compatible with virtually any type of portable music player, including iPods, PDAs, and even cassette tape players. If you're not traveling, you can hook it up to your computer or notebook to listen to your music library on your home stereo. The only requirement is that the TuneCast II be no more than 30 feet away from the receiver (10 feet or less is best).


The TuneCast is an ideal gift for anyone who travels, but especially for drivers. It

means no more juggling CDs or scanning aimlessly through radio stations to find the right sound, which lets the driver keep two eyes on the road. And that is important, especially in the upcoming months of less-than-favorable winter weather conditions.

Families traveling during the holiday season will also appreciate that the TuneCast II can help defeat the always repetitive and highly frustrating, "Are we there yet?" Occupying the little ones with their favorite tunes is a great way to quiet them down.

To make the TuneCast II even more convenient, the device automatically turns itself on when it detects an audio signal. And after 60 seconds with no signal, it turns itself off, so there's no need to fiddle with a power switch. Once you're plugged in, all you have to do is tune your radio to the clearest FM frequency between 88.1 and 107.9MHz.

The TuneCast II comes in two varieties. The TuneCast II F8V3080 retails for \$49.99 and includes a Belkin Mobile Power Cord for the vehicle's cigarette lighter. For extended road trips, this version will eliminate the need to pack extra batteries. The TuneCast II F8V3080-APL (\$39.99), however, requires battery power for operation (unless you buy the optional Mobile Power Cord for \$19.99), which could be tricky on long trips.

Whichever unit fits the bill, the recipient of the TuneCast II is sure to sing your praises on her next road trip. 

BY JOY MARTIN

Cool accessories.

Audiovox is always close to her heart. She loves her Audiovox MP3 Player with FM tuner. Her well-rounded DVD Player with built-in video games. And the big, blue display of her XM Satellite Radio with FM modulator is always nearby. Accessorize your life with Audiovox. Go to www.audiovox.com or call 1-800-645-4994.



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Take Care Of Your Family

Part I: But Don't Forget To Take Care Of Yourself

The instinct to care for our loved ones runs deep. Across generations, women have more often than not filled the role as caretaker for their families. It should come as no surprise, then, that women define their health according to the health of their family members. A recent survey done

by the National Women's Health Resource Center (www.healthywomen.org) reports that 96% of women say having a healthy family is their No.1 priority, while more than 70% say they make the majority of family health care decisions. We don't really need to tell you this; you likely already know.

What troubles us about this data is that if women are so worried about their spouses or children, they may neglect

their own, personal health. This intense draw to care for your family can easily distract from what is truly the most important thing: taking care of yourself.

Many CE devices allow you to manage your health more closely and can make taking care of your family a more efficient operation. More time to do the things she enjoys never hurt any woman. Let's see how CE can make your life easier and, more importantly, more healthy.

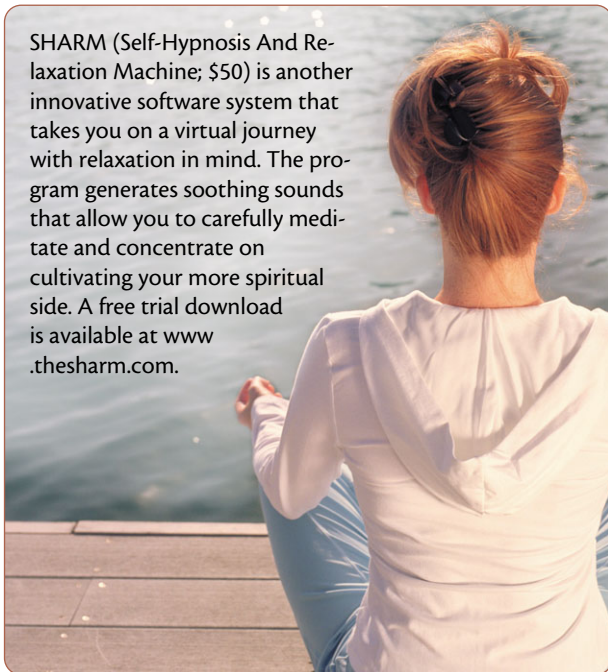
Stamp Out Stress

If mom spends all day running around worrying about her kids, stress often seeps into the equation. Old-fashioned exercise is certainly a good cure for the daily grind, but, more often than not, there's no time for a workout.

Stress reduction technology can keep those tense moments in check. Learn how to get more keenly in touch with your physical and mental well-being with Freeze Framer software available from Dr. Sears' Zone Labs (\$295; www.zonelabsinc.com). By measuring your heart rate through an ear pulse sensor (that connects to your PC via a USB port), the software helps you monitor your breathing techniques and maintain a positive attitude to lower your stress level.



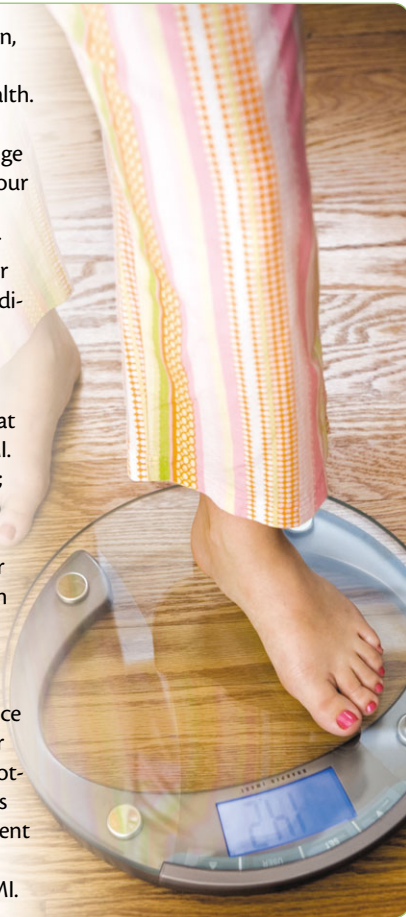
SHARM (Self-Hypnosis And Relaxation Machine; \$50) is another innovative software system that takes you on a virtual journey with relaxation in mind. The program generates soothing sounds that allow you to carefully meditate and concentrate on cultivating your more spiritual side. A free trial download is available at www.thesharm.com.



Gadgets Galore

If you're like most women, your weight is a crucial gauge of your overall health. One way to tell if your weight is in a healthy range is to regularly measure your BMI (body mass index). Your BMI measures your weight in relation to your height and is a helpful indicator of weight-related health risks.

There are many scales that let you monitor your BMI. Sharper Image's (\$129.95; www.sharperimage.com) Digital Glass Bathroom Scale + Body Fat Monitor is a feature-rich scale with a blue backlit LCD. The scale can store data for up to 10 users and uses BIA (bioelectric impedance analysis) to measure your body fat. It has special foot-pads that emit a harmless amount of electrical current through your body to quickly calculate your BMI.



If you're plagued by restless nights, the SLEEPTRACKER (\$149; sleeptracker.com) watch device may be just the gadget you're looking for. The watch monitors your body while you're sleeping and keeps track of your best possible wake times. By programming a window of time in which you need to wake up, the SLEEPTRACKER can tell if you're "almost-awake" during that window and sound the alarm ensuring you wake up refreshed.

Screen For Your Life



Obviously, a woman's health needs differ from those of her husband or children. Especially if your family has a history of breast cancer, it's crucial that you fully understand the results of your annual mammogram and their ramifications for healthy living.

i3archive (www.i3archive.com) does just that. In a nutshell, it's a network storage system of digital medical images and patient data, available to both patients and physicians. It's all made possible through a complex grid-computing system and is available on a nationwide scale.

The Patient Portability Program allows patients to register and log in to a section of i3archive's site to gain information about and digital images of their mammograms. It provides access to the NDMA (National Digital Medical Archive), ultimately giving you more control over your health care decisions. You can chronicle your mammography studies, schedule self-examinations, and chart your family's history—all for free. Check i3archive's site for a listing of digital mammography facilities in your area.

No Time To Waste

This article only scratches the surface in terms of CE and your health. If you or your family is afflicted by such health problems as diabetes or high/low blood pressure, look in our December issue for pointers on how CE can help you keep these more specific conditions in check.

There's a billboard in our metropolitan area that reads, "If you wear out your body, where will you live?" The message is: Your health is paramount; without it, you have nothing. Take some of the burden off yourself—let CE make managing your health a less daunting task. **CE**

BY ELIZABETH DIXON

Simplify Your Life

Get Organized Using Technology



It's 5:30, you just got home from work, and it's time to start dinner. On the way home, you decided tonight you want to try that new recipe you clipped from the newspaper a few days ago. All of the ingredients are in the pantry, so everything should be set. "Where is that recipe? I know I put it in a safe place so it would be easy to find later," you say to yourself.

While searching through the house looking for the recipe, you glance at your calendar and notice that your mother-in-law's birthday was yesterday; you forgot to send a card or even give her a call. This evening is going downhill fast. You are so organized at work; why can't you be more organized at home? But always being organized isn't easy—your life is busy and hectic, and sometimes it feels like you'll never have time to get organized. The truth is, you can't afford to be disorganized. Consider these ways to use your PDA, digital camera, and laptop to simplify your life.

Life In The Kitchen

When it comes to cooking, we like to try new things, but we have too much to do to slave over the stove all evening. Keeping these little recipe clippings can be rather messy, and they're easy to lose. Sure, you can always rewrite them on a recipe card and discard the

Let The Software Do The Work

From bill-paying software to card-making programs, there are plenty of software titles available to help you organize and de-stress various aspects of your life.

Consider using a money management program such as Intuit's Quicken 2006 (starting at \$59.99; www.quicken.com) year round to simplify tax time preparations.

Instead of making a late night trip to Wal-Mart to pick up a birthday or anniversary card, purchase a program that lets you print greeting cards from your computer. Hallmark Card Studio (\$29.99; www.hallmarkcardstudio.com) has a perfect card for every occasion, or you can make your own as a personal touch.

Serious athletes know that training for a marathon requires more than just running a few miles each day. A program such as PC Coach Elite (\$49.95; www.pccoach.com) can help you train for your next competition by tracking training schedules, completed workouts, and workout data from compatible heart rate monitors. Programs such as these will help you stay on track for your training and also provide you with good information and visual charts to help you track your progress in much less time than anyone can generate by hand. ●

Organize On The Go

Regardless of whether you're at home or across the country on a business trip, you can use your laptop to stay organized. One of the most beneficial services your Internet-connected computer can offer you is an online bill-paying service to help you stay on top of bills even while you're away. When you are at home, this kind of service will help eliminate the piles of paperwork that clutter your computer desk area and save you from having to write and mail checks each month. Your time is valuable, so even if your bank charges a small monthly fee of, say, \$5 for this service, it's worth it.

Keeping in touch with friends and family while you're traveling or if you don't live close by isn't easy either. By creating an online blog, you can post information and pictures to tell loved ones about your day and keep them updated about what's going on in your life. This is also a great way to share pictures of your quickly changing small children with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends. ●

clipping, but then you're still left to sort through a stack of cards looking for the right one. If your favorite dish resides in a cookbook, remembering which cookbook and page the recipe is on isn't much easier.

Instead of losing your sanity trying to maintain this unorganized system, consider digitizing your recipe collection. You don't have to do it all at once; instead,

keep your paper recipe cards and cookbooks that you have used for years and only digitize your favorites from the books and the new recipes you receive. Use a recipe management software package that lets you import recipes, such as MasterCook Deluxe 8.0 (\$19.99; www.valusoft.com). You will need to type out handwritten recipes to import them into MasterCook, but recipes that are already typed (such as those from a recipe

book or product's box) can be scanned and sent through an OCR (optical character recognition) process to convert the scanned image into text. Many scanners come with OCR software. If yours does not, consider buying or downloading a program, such as OmniFormat (free; www.omniformat.com). Once you have the recipe in text format, import it into your recipe software program and add keywords that will help you find the recipe next time you want it.

In addition to organizing your recipes using your PC and scanner, MasterCook will also let you create a meal plan for the upcoming week. Once you've created the plan, the software will help you make an organized shopping list that will simplify your next trip to the grocery store.

Uploading your shopping list to your PDA is a great way to ensure it's always with you in case you want to maximize your next unexpected trip to the grocery store. Even better, you can highlight items and delete them when you put them in the cart, eliminating the frustration of trying to figure out what items on your messy paper list are crossed off and which still need to be bought.

Once you have all of the groceries and are ready to start cooking, print out the recipe, upload it to your PDA, or export it to a laptop to have by your side in the kitchen while you cook. PDAs with a color screen, such as the HP iPAQ hx2790 (\$499; www.hp.com), work great for this.

Keep In Contact

Forgetting someone's birthday is easy to do. Unfortunately, it's not something we can easily make up for—especially when it's a close friend or family member. Trying to remember important personal information while juggling work, social, and family schedules is no easy task.

Use calendars. Online calendars can help restore order to this chaotic juggling

game. Yahoo!'s Calendar (calendar.yahoo.com) lets you upload your calendar, such as your calendar in Outlook, to the Web and share it with selected users. It can also manage recurring appointments, such as birthdays and anniversaries. With handy email reminders, you won't have to worry about forgetting your best friend's birthday.

We realize it's not always convenient to access the Web or carry a PDA or laptop to manage your calendar. If this is the case, consider uploading the calendar on your PC to your cell phone or iPod using a data cable and software from the device's manufacturer. This way, you won't have to carry an extra device, but you'll still have your calendar and alarms to remind you of your next appointment.

Keep your address book updated. We all have people in our lives that we don't talk to as often as we should. The holidays are already a very busy time, and you don't need the added stress of updating your address book before you send out your Christmas cards. To prevent this stress, use Outlook or another contact management program to categorize your contacts and flag them as recipients of your holiday letter. This way, when the time comes to address your envelopes, all you have to do is set up a mail merge in Word and print your envelopes with ease, knowing that the most current address is already on file.

Prepare For Disaster

Although we wouldn't wish a fire or natural disaster on anyone, no one is immune to such a catastrophe. Because of this, it's important to be organized and prepared in case a tragedy happens to you.

Take inventory of your valuable belongings for your insurance agent and your own records by snapping pictures of them with your digital camera. By saving




these pictures to a CD and storing them somewhere other than your home—either at a friend's house or in your safe deposit box—you'll be able to identify items and show their value on your insurance claim should the need arise. Hopefully you'll never need these digital pictures. But either way, at least you're clearing their counterparts, boxes of paper prints, out of your storage closet or fire safe.

You'll want a good digital camera for a job like this: one with a strong zoom and the ability to take high-quality images. Some insurance agents require that you can clearly show detail, such as brand names, serial numbers, or receipts of more expensive items, for him to replace

certain possessions in your home. Consider a lightweight camera such as the 7.2MP (megapixel) Casio Exilim EX-Z750 (\$449.99; www.casio-usa.com) that is easy to carry around and takes high-resolution images.

Just Breathe

Our lives are already stressful enough. Take time to get organized and eliminate some of the unnecessary stress in your life. Using the technology that's right at your fingertips is a great place to start. After all, didn't we purchase some of these handy gadgets to help us simplify our lives in the first place? 

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

Win **Free** CE Gear With



Lifestyles™

**WIN
this!**



Need a speaker system for your iPod or MP3 player?

This cool iSphere from Sharper Image can be yours absolutely free! To enter *CE Lifestyles'* product giveaway, just go to www.celifestyles.com/NovFreeGiveaway and sign up. Go online today for your chance to win!

Offer expires: December 1, 2005

Check back often for more great giveaways from *CE Lifestyles* and our partners.

Next month: win a digital camera from Casio!

PRODUCT DONATED BY:

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CE Space Savers

These Clutter Busters Streamline Your Space

Forget Feng Shui. Most of us would settle for cleaning up our clutter and hiding all the cords that sprout from our entertainment centers like snakes from Medusa's head.

If you aim to streamline your space, a number of CE products will fit neatly.

Some are multiuse items; some mount on your cabinets and walls; and some are wireless. We'll show you what the market offers and how much you can expect to pay and give you tips for choosing the right product.

Kitchen Convenience

Most women don't clock the time they spend in the kitchen each week, but it's

probably far more than we realize. Why shouldn't we treat ourselves to a space-saving product of convenience that will keep us company, not to mention entertained and well-informed?

That's what the GE Spacemaker Cordless Phone (model #26976GE1; \$129.99; www.home-electronics.net). This unobtrusive 900MHz phone features an AM/FM clock radio, speakerphone,



Audio Advisors, West Palm Beach FL

call-waiting, caller ID functionality, and an answering machine. It's made up of two units: the Spacemaker section, which mounts under a cabinet in your kitchen, and a smaller base unit that you connect to a telephone jack anywhere in your home. The Spacemaker unit is 3.3 x 14.7 x 7.2 inches (HxWxD).

The GE Ultra-Slim Spacemaker Digital AM/FM CD Player (#75295; \$69.99) gives you more music options than the phone/radio unit. It automatically sets the time (EST, which you can change as you set up the unit) when you plug it in, and it lets you program 10 stations, which you can access via the magnetic remote control—just stick it on your fridge, so you won't misplace it. Along

Shopping Tips

- **Measure your space.** Know the dimensions of your potential purchase and the space in which you intend to place it. Look for possible problems, such as overhangs with cupboards that might partially block the view of cabinet-mounted products. When measuring for a wall-mounted TV, remember to include the width of the speakers if you attach them to the unit.
- **Locate your nearest outlet.** See how close it is to the space in which you want to place the product. Figure out how many connections you'll need to make with the item and other CE products. Along those lines, determine if the product has front or rear input/outputs.
- **Think color.** This is especially true in the kitchen, where you might want a device to match or complement your other appliances. Ask retailers if the product is available in other colors or visit the manufacturer's Web site to see if the company plans to release it in other finishes.
- **Check to see if mounting hardware is included.** Hardware often isn't included with big-ticket items, such as flat-panel TVs. Hardware to mount those devices can cost hundreds of dollars.

with two 2.5-inch front speakers, this 2.4 x 12.5 x 11 radio/CD player has a three-position counter light.

If you practically live in the kitchen, a small TV would be ideal. Audiovox's VE1020 sports a 10.2-inch widescreen LCD drop-down monitor that swivels to give you a wider viewing range (\$699.99; www.audiovox.com). It plays DVDs, CDs, and MP3s, has a speakerphone, and comes with a remote control. You can prepare dinner for you and your family as you watch Rachel Ray's "30 Minute Meals." If the price is too steep, check out Audiovox's less expensive drop-down TVs, such as the 9-inch VE920 (\$439.99) or the 7-inch VE700 (\$399.99), both of which incorporate AM/FM radios.

Philips manufactures an affordable under-the-cabinet TV/radio that plays DVDs, CDs, and MP3s. The AJL700 (\$299.99; www.philips.com) has a 7-inch LCD, comes with a remote control and integrated cooking timer, and is 3.19 x

16.1 x 6.3. As you simmer a spaghetti sauce or chill some dough, you can listen to the news or the "Mamma Mia" soundtrack.

Wall-Mounted TVs

The kitchen isn't the only place in the house that collects clutter. A wall-mounted, flat-panel TV in your family room, den, or bedroom will give you more floor space and eliminate the need for a bulky entertainment unit.

The Dell line of TVs includes a 42-inch high-definition plasma unit (model W4200; \$2,999; www.dell.com). With the included speakers attached, it stretches to almost 52 inches in length. If you don't have that much available wall space, Dell also sells LCD TVs in 30-inch (W3000; \$1,799), 26-inch (W2600; \$1,399), and 19-inch (W1900; \$799) sizes.



Higher-end units can decrease the number of cables you need for your home entertainment system. Panasonic's TH-42XVS30,



As you simmer a sauce or chill some dough, you can listen to the news or the “Mamma Mia” soundtrack.

a 42-inch, HD TV with included digital media receiver (\$5,499.95; www.panasonic.com), uses a single cable to receive digital audio and video because of its HDMI (high-definition multimedia interface) connection. For example, you can use a single cable to connect the HDMI input terminal on the TV to an HDMI-compliant device, such as a DVR player or set-top box.


As you weigh the cost of your purchase, remember that mounting hardware for hanging your TV on the wall often isn't included in the price. For instance, the Panasonic TH-42XVS30 we mentioned includes a sleek stand but no mounting hardware. Panasonic sells two mounting units designed to fit this model: One lets you angle your TV (\$399) and one doesn't (\$299), and neither includes the screws you'll need!

Also keep in mind that mounting a TV probably isn't a do-it-yourself job. The TH-42XVS30 is a 76-pound TV. The mounting bracket only weighs a single pound, but the overall bulk of the TV and bracket is likely more than you'll want to handle alone.



Big Sound

Leave space on your wall for music, too. You can mount the MC235 Micro Hi-Fi System (\$109.99), which is an AM/FM radio and CD player from Philips, as well. The Digital Sound Control and Dynamic Bass Boost features give you one-touch control of sound settings. It comes with a remote control and has 40-station presets and a headphone jack. With its two speakers attached, the model is 19.2 x 16.3 x 7.3. Philips includes the necessary screw assembly for easy mounting of this 15-pound stereo.

We've mentioned a number of products that mount on walls and under cabinets, but that's not the only way to save space. As you shop for home entertainment components, think in terms of devices that will expand the features of your current components without gobbling up lots of space. A docking system for your iPod, for instance, creates stereo sound without the need for a stereo. 

BY RACHEL DEROWITZCH

Dust & Germ Fighters

Consult the operating manual that comes with your CE device. It likely contains instructions on what to use for cleaning it.

As friends and family gather 'round your home entertainment products, so do dust and germs. Don't damage your pricey purchases with \$2 household cleaners. There's a smart way to approach cleaning your CE goods, and it begins with investing in products designed to use with them.

Falcon Safety Products (www.falconsafety.com), for example, manufactures the Dust-Off line of CE cleaning products. A pack of 20 disposable StatiqueS wipes, which you can use on any electronic equipment, including screens, costs only \$5.99. The CD Lens Cleaner (\$5.99) works on most CD and DVD players.

Some items, such as phones, need to be sanitized too. Dust-Off Disinfecting Phone Wipes cost \$8.99 per 50-count tub. ●

CE Designers

The Brains Behind The Designs



There are the artists. There are the engineers. And then there are the gadget designers. While artists usually focus on beauty and engineers usually focus on functionality, it's the gadget designers who combine the two to come up with the best of both worlds.

You don't get both form and function in the same device without some trade-offs, but recently, we've seen an interesting blend of the two in products such as the Apple iMac G5 computer (starting at \$1,299; www.apple.com), Motorola RAZR cell phone (\$199.99; www.motorola.com), or Casio EX-S500 (\$399.99; www.casio.com).

Designers are also now recognizing the needs of women and trying to give them what they want. That's not surprising, considering research reveals that, at least in the United States, women are now buying more electronic devices than men. We're now seeing stylish, sleek, fashionable products that have a high show-off factor, as well as improved functionality.

We got into the heads of consumer electronics designers of some top companies to see how they come up with their creations.

It All Starts With An Idea

Like in any creative profession, ideas sometimes pop up out of nowhere. That's why it's important that electronics

Stages Of The Design Process

Designers have to be very careful to maintain a mix of functionality and good looks for any kind of gadget to work. Then, they must avoid the one-size-fits-all approach and instead target specific market areas. This is why the process of designing has to be very streamlined. Mitsubishi's designers, for instance, have an interactive process that includes key people from the sales, marketing, business planning, engineering, quality assurance, procurement, and manufacturing departments. Once this Product Development Group has overseen several versions, it freezes the plan and engineers begin the actual design work.

Nokia's process usually starts with understanding market demand, after which the design team explores the options that serve the essential functionality required of a product. Next, it works on the user interface functionalities and consider human and ergonomic factors. The final step involves the styling in terms of form and line, color, material, texture, and overall composition. ●

Keeping Tabs On The Market

No company is about to release a product into the market shelf-space unless it's sure about consumer preferences, buying conditions, and the general acceptance level of the market. That's why designers focus a lot of their energy on finding out early what consumers are really looking for.

One of the factors that is the most important in this research is watching the way people use the product. For Sony's S2 Sports line of audio devices and accessories, for instance, the team observed consumers jogging, and for home products, it watched consumers set up and use the A/V systems.

Then there's the ergonomic research. "The team examines the sizes of hands and fingers and the shapes of heads," says Ellen Glassman, Sony's general manager of brand design and strategy. "The research ensures the product's buttons are spaced properly and the headphones fit just right."

Another important issue for companies these days is global marketability. "Since a new trend can emerge from many global cultural sources, we have to have our radar sensitivity on high at all times," says Frank Nuovo, Nokia's chief designer. "We have to look for things which are not at the surface but are in motion toward the surface."

Designers also have to be aware of what's cool in music, architecture, fashion, and behavior of the masses. Glassman says, "We often focus on the extremes in society, as they can sometimes predict what will happen with the masses." ●

designers are surrounded by a creative atmosphere. Sony recognizes this and encourages its designers to hang out at various trade shows, furniture fairs, and even art exhibits. "Locally, designer teams visit museums, hot clubs, and restaurants," says Ellen Glassman, Sony's general manager of brand design and strategy. In fact,

each Sony Design Center has a library that houses a wide array of publications from many disciplines and cultures to ignite the creative spark, which can lead to some very interesting designs.

Motorola's new PEBL (www.motorola.com), a smooth, oval handset, for

example, was inspired by a river rock. In fact, this is one handset that doesn't feel like a cell phone. It's organic, elegant, and calming. (The PEBL is expected to be available this fall. As of press time, pricing information had not yet been released.)

Device design is not all art and creativity though. A lot of thought goes into industry research, design trends, consumer and market surveys, industry trade groups, new technology, and the most important factor of all, customer choices, before a company decides on the best design for a product.

Many times, a newer model is based off another product, as in the case of the Nokia 8800 series of cell phones from Motorola. This series was first inspired by the original Nokia 8810 premium design from 1997, which was based on automotive designs and the qualities of personal accessories such as watches and pens. The sleek, new 8801 model is an evolution of the 8810 and has evolved over a number of other models throughout the years. According to Nokia's Web site (www.nokiausa.com/phones/8801), the 8801 is "designed for the senses." It will be available in October for \$699.

Sony's Liv design series came about only because the designers saw a need and thought it should be fulfilled. "I worked with my team to put together background information that clearly showed how affordable design is a marketplace trend and that the style-conscious consumer was being underserved in electronics," says Glassman. So the team got together and created an image board of American household interiors and examined the products that contributed to each room. From that research, they worked with marketing to develop a product plan, which ended up providing Liv designs with "advanced functionality and subtle, space-conscious design," according to Sony's Web site (www.sonymstyle.com).

Form, Function, Or Customer Satisfaction?

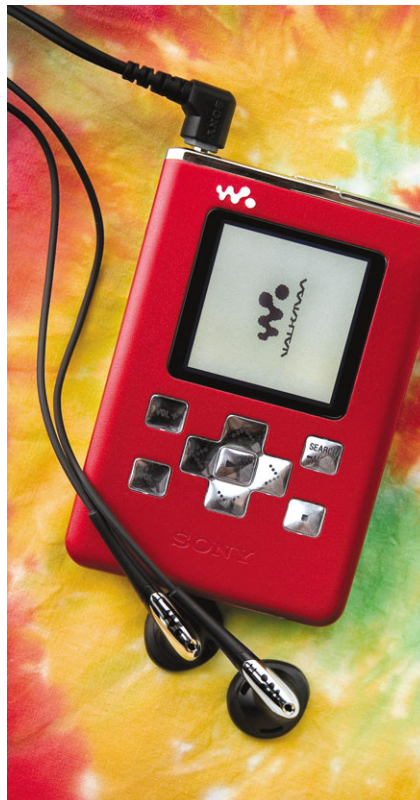
When it comes to design, different companies have different criteria. While some opt for the latest technology, others go for sleeker and better looks. But they all agree that customer satisfaction tops the list.

Glassman says that they always think about the customer first. Once they've established how the consumer will use the product, they then focus their attention on factors such as style, function, and technology.

Each category of product is viewed in a different way. For instance, the portable audio category speaks to a personal fashion sense, so designers focus on the style of the device. Comfort and ergonomics are important in headphones, where the shape of the ears affects the way the sound quality manifests itself in the product's design, and environment is crucial when it comes to home products—either the product is hidden where it blends into the room, or it's a very visible status symbol. Glassman says it's important to be able to figure out how the consumer will use the product.

Sony's NW-HD5 (\$299.95; www.sonystyle.com), a hard drive-based digital music player, is an example of a very consumer-focused design. The screen rotates to a vertical or horizontal position so the user can hold the product however she thinks is most comfortable. Apple's iPod is another product designed to be consumer-friendly. While many techies complain about its lack of features, it does what it's meant to do in the best possible way, and its popularity is witness to that.

A lot of companies are now realizing that product development requires more than good engineering. Motorola, for instance, has been changing its approach over the years by providing



sleeker designs instead of the heftier keypads and bulkier bodies of older models. And the company has been quite successful; the success of its RAZR cell phone proves that it's not just about the technology anymore.

It's important though that one design feature shouldn't be too dominant in any model. "Design is based on many factors and no single element should overdrive a design or it will be out of balance," says Frank Nuovo, Nokia's chief designer. "There are opportunities when one characteristic is a dominant influence for a design; for instance, a fashion product or a sport product. In these cases, the design must consider both appeal and functionality tied to the specific customer expectation." He says that while usability is always a concern, designers also have to make sure that there is innovation. They can't always come up with purely comfortable solutions if there is a better alternative waiting to be discovered. "All things considered,

people want a beautiful product, so it must function and look great."


Mitsubishi's focus remains on high performance and attractive designs at competitive prices. "We include more leading-edge features and performance in our top models and accept the higher prices that result," says Marty Zanfino, Mitsubishi's director of product development. "Once every few years, we introduce an advanced product that pushes our engineers more aggressively than usual, which both provides our engineers with more know-how and provides our customers with more unique product offerings."

What's Hot? What's Not?

Being able to look ahead and design future trends is one of the most important aspects of the designer's job. "We design two years (or more) in advance of a product launch and are always forecasting the trends ahead," says Glassman. "With such a broad array of products, we are constantly thinking five to 10 years in advance for both technology and design breakthroughs."

Nokia tries to keep its designs futuristic by appealing both to the masses and to focused markets. "Our products can be found with black-and-white gloss finishes, as well as the industry standard silver," explains Nuovo. The Nokia 8800 series follows this pattern, with its polished and brushed stainless steel case.

Motorola designers say that in terms of color, they're seeing trends in European and Asian fashion, some chromatic accents such as muted earth tones and warm accents such as orange. Converting these trends to products is their goal.

So what's up next? Nuovo answers, "Simply beautiful products that are easy to use and a joy to interact with." 

BY MRIDU KHULLAR

tips

Backyard Art

1

Home Sweet Home

When the opportunity arises, take lots of photos of your home involving the ones who love and enjoy it most: your family. Grab your camera to record family memories spent together in your front or backyard. Photograph your children jumping into heaping piles of leaves. Position yourself to get close-up shots of their expressions and set your camera on a faster shutter speed to capture the leaves floating in midair. Snap shots of your family building a snowman and catch the excitement on their faces as they sled down the backyard hill for the 10th time. These photos will display two of your most valuable assets together: your family and your home.

2

Winter Wonderland

If you live in an area that experiences harsh, cold winter weather, turn your frozen backyard into a stunning photo collection. During the winter, you are sure to find your backyard full of some of nature's most beautiful creations. Nothing emits beauty and peace like an undisturbed, sparkling blanket of white—especially during the early morning sunrise. Crawl out of bed early to catch photos of the light as it meets the new fallen snow. Or, frame four different prints of snow drifts and hang them in a square for dramatic wall art.

3

From A Distance

If you look out your back window and see rolling hills for miles, use that scene to create a serene landscape photo. Choose an area of interest that draws your attention, such as a mountain peak or an appealing tree. With most photos, it is often more interesting not to position your focal point in the center of your frame. Instead, use the rule of thirds: Position the focal point about a third of the way in from one side of the frame and a third of the way down from the top. This kind of scenery shot requires that you are far away from the landscape, so you can fit a lot of it into the camera's frame. Or, if you are closer than you would prefer, use a wide angle lens to capture as much of the scene in the frame as possible. Keep steady while photographing to avoid blur or, better yet, use a tripod.

4

Abstract Art

People are intrigued by abstract art, which is why your backyard is a great place to take some brilliant photos. Your backyard is full of interesting patterns, unique angles, and radiant colors; the challenge is turning them into a creative masterpiece. Look at the way the angles of a tree's branches form silhouettes in the sunset. Or, photograph an eye-catching pattern that the leaves create with their gorgeous fall colors. A creative photographer can even find beauty in lines created by the peeling paint on an old farm building. When it comes to abstract, the possibilities are endless.

5

Nature At Its Best

Use the optical zoom feature to snap remarkably close pictures of undisturbed beauty created by nature. You can experiment using digital zoom, as well, but usually digitally zoomed shots look pixilated, which you especially don't want in a close-up. Look for interesting occurrences such as dew drops on a colorful fall leaf or photograph Jack Frost as he paints your entire backyard. Take close-ups of the icicles that hang from the eaves of your home, making sure to capture all their delicate details. And, with birds on the move for winter, you might catch a glimpse (and a photo!) of a rare species making a pit stop at your bird feeder.



BY LINNÉ OURADA

First Glimpse Special Product Section

This special product section is produced in partnership with leading consumer electronics manufacturers and allows us to provide readers with the most timely product information possible. Browse through these First Glimpse pages to learn about the latest hot products.

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first glimpse

Special Product Section

Samsung DVD-L70
www.samsung.com
MSRP: \$199.99



Slim, Stylish & Affordable

Samsung's new DVD-L70 7-inch LCD portable DVD player demonstrates Samsung's ability to offer an affordable portable DVD player that is as stylish as it is compact and lightweight.

With a convenient 7-inch LCD, the DVD-L70 is for consumers who want an ultra-light portable DVD player but don't want to sacrifice functionality. The DVD-L70 makes a style statement like no other player available on the market today.

The LDC offers 480p resolution, a 16:9 aspect ratio, and a 160-degree viewing angle for impressive front-of-screen performance in a 7-inch TFT LCD. It also comes equipped with a letterbox eliminator (a great feature for this smaller screen)

and picture CD viewer (awesome for when you just can't wait to view your vacation photos).

The DVD-L70 also makes a style statement with its sleek 1-inch deep design. It is optimal for consumers who want an ultra-light portable DVD player but don't want to sacrifice functionality. In addition, this unit comes complete with a car charger for true on-the-go capability.

Portable DVD players make fantastic gifts, and with the holidays quickly approaching, the DVD-L70 is a perfect gift for families with kids. Who wants to lug around a big DVD player when your car is packed full of luggage for your trip to

first glimpse

Special Product Section



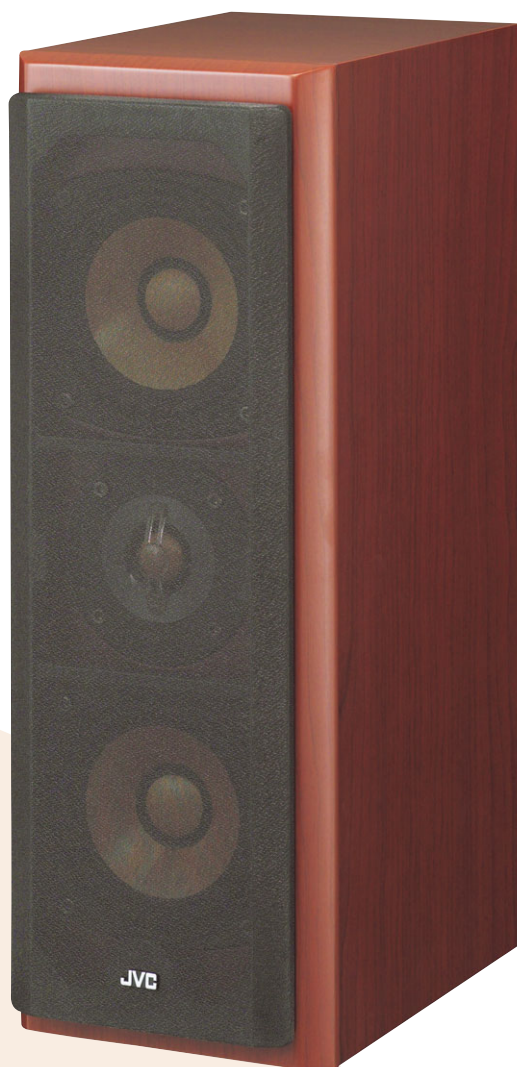
Grandma's on Christmas Day? And we all know that busy little hands can often wreak havoc on toys, but with a low \$199.99 price point, moms and dads won't feel anxious about leaving the DVD-L70 in the backseat.

DVD-L70 Features At A Glance

- New midsize LCD portable DVD player
- 7-inch TFT LCD, slim, compact, and light for better mobility
- Thin design
- Rechargeable Ni-MH battery (lasts 2.5 hours a charge)

- Car adapter
- Two headphone jacks
- Picture CD viewer
- Reverse display button





JVC SX-WD8 & SX-WD10 Speakers

www.jvc.com

MSRP: SX-WD8: \$1,300 per pair;

SX-WD10: \$1,700 per pair

JVC's New Sake-Soaked, Wood Cone Speaker Systems

JVC has introduced two home audio speaker systems that use the company's unique sake-soaked birch wood speaker components. This marks the first time JVC has made its wood cone technology available in separate speakers.

JVC's wood cone speakers were 20 years in the making because forming the wood sheets into a speaker cone proved daunting—they would crack or split when stamped. The solution turned out to be sake, or Japanese rice wine. A JVC audio engineer in Japan hit upon the sake solution while enjoying dried squid at a restaurant. He asked if anything special was done to make the dried squid so chewy, and he was told

that it was soaked in sake. Inspired, the JVC team tried the same technique with the wood sheets. It worked—after soaking in sake, the sheets could be pressed into speaker cones without splitting.

The two new speaker systems created from the "sake solution" are a floor-standing tower model, the SX-WD10, and a bookshelf system, the SX-WD8. Both are three-driver, two-way, bass-reflex systems.

JVC pursued wood as a speaker cone material in the first place because it provides an ideal combination of high sound propagation speed and natural vibration attenuation, allowing

first glimpse

Special Product Section



the speakers to naturally reproduce a wide frequency range. With conventional paper cones, sound spreads at the same speed in all directions, causing unnatural resonant points with limited frequency response. Wood cones produce few resonant points because of the grain, so frequency response is improved and sound quality is significantly enhanced. JVC engineers tried several types of wood, but birch proved to have the best acoustic properties, and sake was the missing link in creating this innovative system.

Both JVC speaker systems are composed of a pair of four-inch wood mid/bass drivers and a one-inch dome tweeter that

uses a birch wood dome. Power handling is 150 watts. The mid/bass drivers feature a die cast aluminum frame and use an edgewise-wound, four-layer voice coil. The tweeter uses a copper-clad aluminum voice coil and neodymium magnets. Both models feature real cherry veneer enclosures and include screw-type, gold-plated speaker terminals.

JVC

The Perfect Experience / —

first glimpse

Special Product Section



HP Pavilion LC3700n 37-Inch HD LCD TV
www.hp.com
MSRP: \$2,999.99

Enjoy A Brighter, Clearer Picture

HP's new high-definition Pavilion LCD TVs redefine style and deliver an incredible picture. By adding a built-in high-definition tuner to each TV and utilizing exclusive HP Visual Fidelity technologies, HP Pavilion LCD TVs deliver a best-in-class image frame-by-frame and even room-by-room.

Illuminating Imaging

The HP Pavilion LCD TVs produce one of the industry's sharpest, clearest images. By implementing a collection of leading-edge technologies called HP Visual Fidelity, the entire line of HP Pavilion LCD TVs produce a resounding 4000:1 Dynamic Contrast Ratio. Regardless of what you're watching, you're watching it in outstanding clarity.

HP Visual Fidelity

HP uses several cutting-edge technologies to make its TVs an excellent value.

HP's Photorealistic Sharpness Enhancement analyzes an object's pixels frame-by-frame and automatically lightens or darkens surrounding pixels to enhance overall picture quality and contrast.

The company's 3-D Color Enrichment System fine-tunes the TV's color using up to 50 unique customized sliders; the TV also automatically adjusts its brightness levels to optimize color contrast and vividness.

Ambient Light Adaptation is a built-in light sensor in the TV that measures ambient light and automatically adjusts its

first glimpse

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brightness to match the room; brightness is decreased in darker rooms, while in lighter rooms it is increased.

Image Adaptive Contrast Optimization analyzes every frame of video and increases or decreases black levels in respect to the on-screen image.

Immersive Audio

HP designed the new Pavilion LCD TVs to sound as good as they look.

Virtual Dolby Digital Pro Logic II is a unique sound processing format that projects sound off a room's wall to emulate the feel of a properly placed surround-sound system in your living room.

BBE Mach3 Bass is an innovative sound format that processes low-frequency effects to bring out subtleties and warm tones for a fuller audio experience.

HP Pavilion LCD TVs feature two detachable speakers, enabling you to place the TV in smaller spaces.



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Special Product Section



iHome

MSRP: \$129.95

www.ihomedirect.com

(800) 755-9787

The Home System For Your iPod

Wake up to *your* music.

The new iHome iH5 wakes you gradually and lulls you to sleep with your iPod music.

The iH5 Reson8 speakers have incredibly rich, natural stereo sound.

It has a digital AM/FM clock radio. And it does all this while charging your iPod, so it's ready to go when you are.

The iH5 is great in any room in the house. Try one in your kitchen or home office.

Features:

- Clean, contemporary design complements the look of your iPod
- Wake to your iPod, AM/FM radio, or buzzer
- Removable dock inserts fit all docking iPods*, and unit charges your iPod while docked

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- Adjust preset time to any of seven different time zones with one button; clock also adjusts for daylight savings time automatically
- Gentle wake and gradual sleep lulls you to sleep and allows for a less startling wake-up
- Stereo drivers in specially designed Reson8™ speaker chambers deliver astounding clarity, depth, and power

iHome™
the home system for your iPod®

iPod not included.

*iPod shuffle must use in-line jack.

iPod is a registered trademark owned by Apple Computer Inc. in the U.S. and in other countries. iHome and Reson8 are trademarks of SDI Technologies, Inc.

first glimpse

Special Product Section

**Netgear Storage
Central SC101**
www.netgear.com
MSRP: \$149.99



Sharable, Expandable, Fail-Safe Storage

Netgear's Storage Central SC101 lets you store your files, music, video, games, photos, and financial records in one central location, accessible as a letter drive on your PC.

You can share files easily with everyone on the network, while keeping your personal files private, and you can safeguard your valuable files by keeping real-time duplicate copies—automatically and effortlessly. Advanced backup software is included: Setup and configuration are a breeze with the Smart Wizard.

With Storage Central you can add the capacity you need to store, share, and back up your valuable digital content—music, games, photos, videos, and office documents—instantly, easily, and securely, all with the simplicity of your hard drive. (IDE drives sold separately.)

Easy Setup & Installation

Storage Central is easy to set up and install. Just slide in one or two 3.5-inch IDE disk drives of any capacity, connect Storage Central to any wired or wireless router or switch from any vendor, and finally configure with Smart Wizard install assistant. Now you're ready to access files from any PC on your network, as a simple letter drive.

Secure All Your Valuable Files

Storage Central automatically stores and mirrors your important digital content such as music, games, photos, and more. It ensures that no one can access your files but you, and

first glimpse

Special Product Section



it delivers the utmost privacy for your valuable data content. With Storage Central, you can expand outgrown storage volumes and add more capacity whenever you need it—instantly and easily. Storage Central makes real-time copies of your valuable data, ensuring maximum protection against data loss. Additionally, storage can be expanded indefinitely, keeping pace with all your future storage needs. SmartSync Pro advanced backup software is included.

Advanced Technology

Storage Central features Z-SAN (Storage Area Network), an advanced network storage technology. Z-SANs provide IP-based, block-level data transfers that enable multiple users to

make efficient use of drives within the network through the dynamic allocation of volumes across multiple hard disks. Z-SAN also enables file and volume sharing among multiple users on the network to be as seamless as accessing their local C drive. Additionally, Z-SAN assures users that their files are protected from hard drive failure, through automatic mirroring between two hard disks within the same Storage Central unit.

NETGEAR®
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music & movies

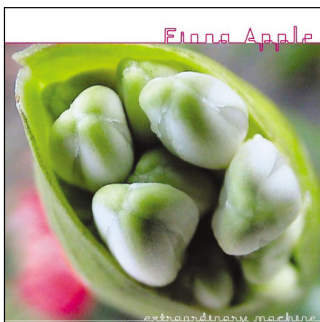
music

BY ELIZABETH DIXON

Fiona Apple

• AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$18.98

EXTRAORDINARY MACHINE [Epic Records]



To the disappointment of her devoted fan base, the original “Extraordinary Machine” was unexpectedly postponed last year by Sony in a dubious swirl of controversy. MP3s from the album ultimately emerged online (as they often do), and fans have enjoyed the album’s tracks ever since. Some critics argue the album’s delay is a marketing ploy, while others cite doubts by the label (or Fiona herself) as to the quality of its original tracks.

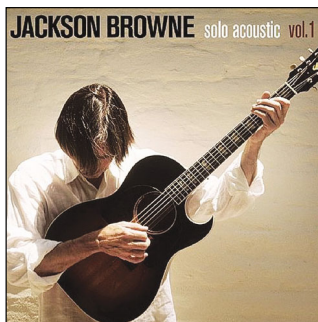
Long story short: The current album sports new versions of the tracks previously leaked on the Internet, with a hip-hop producer (Mike Elizondo) and Epic claiming it’s radically different from the original. Does that make sense? Huh. Quite the run-around for one silly little album.

Count on Fiona to come in strong with piano-driven melodies and rhythmic arrangements. Although her voice may sound a little weathered, her gusto’s all the same. Here’s hoping it’s worth the wait.

Jackson Browne

• AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$16.98

SOLO ACOUSTIC, VOL. 1 [Inside Recordings]



We simply cannot say enough about this legendary songwriter; we adore his lyrics and have learned many a life’s lesson from his pen. Browne proves that the best artists do it acoustic—they don’t hide behind the hype. He lets the music stand for itself. This is poetry in motion.

Old 97’s

• AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$19.98

ALIVE & WIRED [New West Records]

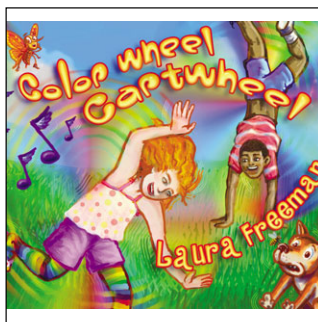


Try as they might, the critics just can’t get a good handle on the Old 97’s. They’re both a little bit country and a little bit rock-n-roll—some call it y’alternative. Either way, this live double-disc compilation brings to life old favorites and proves this band will be around for years to come.

Laura Freeman

• AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$16

COLOR WHEEL CARTWHEEL [Green Kid Music]



Kids’ music makes us smile, and this album is no exception. Follow the rainbow to this lively release while your kids explore different playful and imaginative musical styles with language lessons to boot. The album was recorded in New Orleans by native artists, and \$1 from each CD sale benefits Hurricane Katrina victims.

O.A.R.

• AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$15.98

STORIES OF A STRANGER [Lava Records]



This seventh studio album from Of A Revolution maintains the band’s genre-busting, feel-good tradition. Former Talking Heads member Jerry Harrison comes onboard as producer as O.A.R. merges reggae and pop while keeping a distinct rock-n-roll flavor. This album will set the carefree tone for your next great party.

movies

BY VINCE COGLEY

The Sisterhood Of The Traveling Pants

RATING: PG • AVAILABLE: OCT. 11 • PRICE: \$28.98



It's hard not to think of this movie as the teenybopper edition of "The Divine Secrets Of The Ya-Ya Sisterhood." A young but surprisingly talented quartet of Amber Tamblyn (of CBS' "Joan of Arcadia"), Alexis Bledel (from the WB's "Gilmore Girls"), America Ferrera ("Real Women Have Curves"), and newcomer Blake Lively carry the film. As they experience a summer apart, they are bonded by a pair of jeans that magically fit each girl perfectly. The four stories cover a wide swath of weighty issues that make other teen movies seem pale in comparison. Screen "Traveling Pants" during a girls' night; it's a tough sell for the male demographic.

The Sound Of Music (40th Anniversary Edition)

RATING: G • AVAILABLE: NOV. 15 • PRICE: \$26.98



Anyone who's a fan of the classic Silver Screen adaptation of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical should be thoroughly satisfied with all of the extras packed into this DVD. In addition to having remastered Dolby Digital 5.1 audio, this latest edition of the Robert Wise classic features behind-the-scenes footage and commentary by Wise, Julie Andrews, and Christopher Plummer. Andrews plays Maria, a nun-in-training who leaves her convent to care for the motherless von Trapp children. Maria teaches the children to sing and, in the process, falls in love with them and (eventually) their widower father, Captain von Trapp (Plummer).

Fever Pitch

RATING: PG-13 • AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$29.98



The tide of Red Sox bandwagoning that swept the nation after the BoSox won their first World Series title in 86 years has become a little passé, but that shouldn't detract from this endearing comedy loosely based on Nick Hornby's novel of the same name. Farrelly Brothers (Bobby and Peter; "Dumb and Dumber," "There's Something About Mary," and "Shallow Hal") fans may find this latest effort a foul ball when laid beside their previous

works, yet it's hard to turn away from the chemistry between Jimmy Fallon and Drew Barrymore. Barrymore plays Lindsey Meeks, a workaholic executive drawn to high school teacher Ben (Fallon), whose life-long commitment to his favorite baseball team makes Meeks question if it's possible to turn a sports fanatic into a true romantic. Big leaguers Jason Varitek and Johnny Damon (real-life Red Sox) join a host of other MLB players who add a touch of realism to the film.

Lords Of Dogtown: Unrated Extended Cut

RATING: PG-13 • AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$29.98



Director Catherine Hardwicke follows her eye-opening film "Thirteen" with her vision of the skateboarding phenomenon that emerged in California during the 1970s. The film stars John Robinson ("Elephant") as skateboarding legend Stacy Peralta (the real-life Peralta wrote the film) and relatively fresh faces Emile Hirsch ("The Dangerous Lives Of Alter Boys," "The Girl Next Door") and Victor Rasuk ("Raising Victor Vargas") as Peralta's fellow Z Boys. Familiar faces Heath Ledger ("A Knight's Tale," "Ned Kelly"), Rebecca De Mornay ("Risky Business," "Backdraft"), and Nikki Reed ("Thirteen") also lend their talents to the film. There is a lot of action and drama and enough teenage mischief to fill two films. If "Lords" leaves you thirsty for more skateboarding action, consider Peralta's own documentary, "Dogtown And Z-Boys."

For The Kids

The Adventures Of Raggedy Ann And Andy: The Pixling Adventure

RATING: G • AVAILABLE: NOW • PRICE: \$12.95



This is a great DVD to bridge the generation gap between you and the little ones. In addition to three episodes in Raggedyland ("The Pixling Adventure," "The Beastly Ghost Adventure," "The Ransom Of The Sunny Bunny Adventure"), the magical world that exists when the lights in Marcella's bedroom go out, the DVD includes a history of Raggedy Ann and Andy. If you like this one, be sure to check out "The Adventures Of Raggedy Ann And Andy: The Mabbitt Adventure."

games . . .

for you and the people in your life

BY VINCE COGLEY

Burnout Revenge

• PRICE: \$49.99



RATING



Multiplatform

Calling EA's Burnout Revenge a mere racing game is a lot like declaring Elvis Presley was a flash in the pan. In fact, you'll probably find winning races pales in comparison to the sheer amount of automotive chaos you can sow, as creating gargantuan accidents and massive multiple car pileups is as much of an object as crossing the finish line. It's the perfect panacea for any road rage you might have gathered during the post-work commute.

• ELECTRONIC ARTS • WWW.EA.COM

Dance Dance Revolution: Extreme 2

• PRICE: \$39.99



RATING



PlayStation 2

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but sometimes you can't beat the original. Any game that gives you entertainment and exercise is doubly good, and Konami's Dance Dance Revolution: Extreme 2 delivers healthy amounts of both. Not only does the latest edition of Konami's popular dance-it-up game feature support for the EyeToy (sold separately), but also it has exclusively licensed songs and multi-player online gameplay. Use the Workout Mode to stay in shape and add your own custom dance moves with the Edit Mode.

• KONAMI • WWW.KONAMI.COM

Perfect Dark Zero

• PRICE: \$59.99



RATING



XBox 360

As one of the launch titles for the Xbox 360, expect this FPS (first person shooter) to be an instant hit with anyone lucky enough to land Microsoft's next-generation gaming console (hint, hint). This prequel to the original Nintendo 64 game (Perfect Dark) should definitely quench Halo enthusiasts' thirst until Master Chief has his own day in the Xbox-360 sun. You assume the mantle of Joanna Dark—bounty hunter and femme fatale—in both a compelling single-player adventure and exhilarating multiplayer action via Xbox Live.

• MICROSOFT • WWW.PERFECTDARKZERO.COM

Bertone Coffeebreak Car

• WWW.ESPRESSO-MACHINE-GUIDE.COM • PRICE: \$77 TO \$92



Never an espresso drive-thru around when you need one? Brew your own, right in your car. This espresso machine, also known as the laPavoni SpA Velox, plugs into your car's 12-volt power jack. For about \$77 to \$92, you'll be on the road to seriously concentrated caffeine. You'll find it under one name or the other on coffeshop sites such as www.caffetucano.com and www.espresso-machine-guide.com.

Griffin PowerJolt

• WWW.GRIFFINTECHNOLOGY.COM • PRICE: \$24.99

Speaking of your car's 12-volt plug, now it can recharge your iPod when it's not making coffee. Plug in the stylish Griffin PowerJolt (www.griffintechnology.com) recharger, and you can rejuvenate your iPod (fourth-generation), shuffle, Mini, or Photo as you drive. Best of all, at only \$24.99, you can give these out to friends, family, and even Secret Santa pals.



Logitech Harmony 520

• WWW.LOGITECH.COM • PRICE: \$99.99

We can't even see some family members' coffee tables for all the remote controls on them. But the thought of buying them a universal remote to replace them all makes us worry about setup and cost, not to mention compatibility with their home electronics.

Logitech's new low-cost Harmony 520 (\$99.99, www.logitech.com) takes aim at all of these concerns. It makes setup easy for mainstream users, and we have never been able to fault Logitech's quality.



... & gifts
on the lighter side of technology

BY MARTY SEMS

what they're SAYIN

BY MRIDU KHULLAR

Steel red, tangy blue, shocking pink, sexy silver . . . these may not be the colors in the rainbow, but they sure seem to be the trendy hues in today's digital world. So, do flashy colors mean you're extra hip or just trying too hard? We spoke to four women from different walks of life and asked them what they think of colored gadgets.

NATALIE KLEIN

SINGLE WOMAN

Natalie Klein is a 23-year-old grad student at the University of Rochester and studies the mind and language. When she isn't busy attending (or teaching!) classes, Natalie's reading, writing, cooking, or geocaching. And if she's feeling really productive, a workout at the gym does wonders.



Natalie loves to travel, too, and when she does, her gadgets usually go with her. "I'm in Italy right now, and I'm pulling out my digital camera and GPRS [General Packet Radio

Service] every five minutes, finding geocaches hidden around Rome, taking pictures of the ruins, as well as marking hiking trails and interesting cafés I want to return to."

When it comes to gadgets, Natalie tends to avoid colored ones and goes with sleek metallic silver (though she does have a red Game Boy Advance SP and a pink iPod). For Natalie, gadgets have to be a subtle extension of her life, not huge attention grabbers. "I like them to fit in with my décor and house and not have cords hanging all over the place," she says.

LENA L. WEST

BUSINESS WOMAN

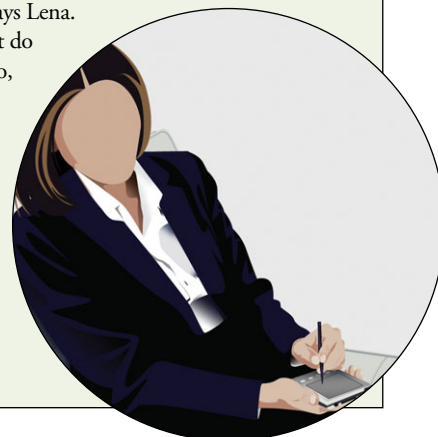
Thirty-something CEO of xynoMedia Technology (www.xynomedia.com), Lena L. West certainly knows her way around when it comes to technology. Not only is Lena savvy in her own gadget choices, but she also helps small companies make wise technology choices through her business.

Lena is a big sci-fi and action fan and spends a lot of time at the movies. She's also a member of two book clubs, and surfing the 'Net and researching odd bits of trivia are her favorite pastimes. She says that if she won \$10,000 in a lottery, she'd probably just buy a new iPod, splurge on a TiVo system, or get a portable DVD player.

While Lena would rather not hold back when it comes to buying and upgrading her electronics, she's a bit on the conservative side in terms of color. "I think of gadgets in a more utilitarian way," says Lena.

"Does it function? Does it do what it's supposed to? I do, however, think that silver gadgets look sleeker and cooler than others."

If not silver, her next choice of gadgets is black. "It's more professional. I think colored devices are corny and overly girly."



G

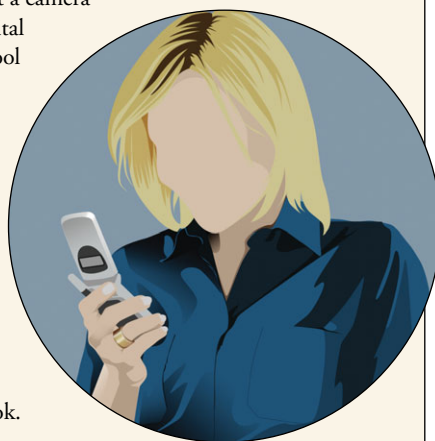
Do You Prefer Colored Electronic Devices?

TISH DAVIDSON

NEW EMPTY-NESTER

Tish Davidson, 53, is a new empty-nester, as her younger daughter has just left for college. She says that she's sure they'll stay in touch electronically—her daughter just bought a camera phone and got a digital camera for high school graduation, so she can take and download pictures.

Tish lives on spontaneity and is willing to take off in the middle of the night to drive to the ocean to watch the sunrise. She's also a great cook.



While gadgets aren't high on the priority list for Tish, she does use her cell phone and owns a digital camera. Her husband takes charge of all things electrical and computer related (he has a Ph.D. in computer science), and she takes care of all things related to the cars.

Even though she loves primary colors such as red, yellow, and blue, when it comes to electronic devices, she likes to stick with black and silver. "I find I get tired of bright colors quickly and find neutral colors more pleasing for the long haul," she says. "However, if I buy something I know I will only have for a short time, then I like bright colors." When she watches home makeover shows on TV, she often wonders how soon the homeowner gets sick of the brightly colored walls and rugs, especially when they are intrusive colors such as orange.

RENA LARRAÑAGA

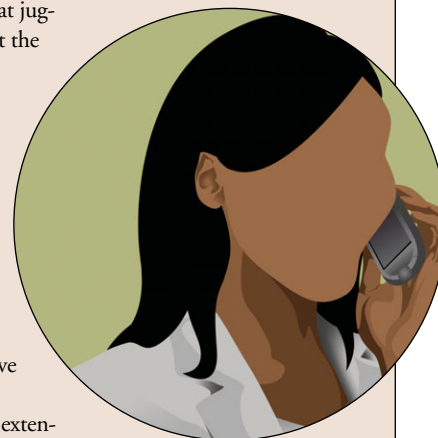
MOTHER

Rena Larrañaga, 36, a full-time sales manager and editor for a monthly direct mail magazine in Albuquerque is a devoted mom and problem solver, who, like most working moms, is great at juggling multiple projects at the same time.

While Rena's typical color choices are deep jewel tones—purples, blues, maroons, and greens—her gadgets are usually geared to keep up professional appearances in silver and black. She would love to opt for color though.

"Colored gadgets are an extension of your personality, just like the color of car we choose to drive or the color of clothes we prefer to wear," she says. "Since so much of my life is work and meeting with clients I'm trying to impress, I keep to the basic black or silver." However, she's personalized the cell phone ring to her college fight song and loves to be up-to-date with her gadgets.

And with her Pocket PC 6600 (various carriers and prices; www.audiovox.com) with integrated phone, camera, and pull-out keyboard, the show-off factor is always great. "I like it when people ask 'Is that your phone?' when they see me talking on it," she says. "Then they want to know if it has a camera. I also like playing my college fight song for all my alumni friends and our rivals, too!"



CE Color Preferences

While many manufacturers may be putting more color choices in their product lines, it's interesting to note that all the women we interviewed prefer silver and black over "girly" colors. Just goes to show that not every woman likes to walk into a board room (or any room) with a pink PDA hanging out of her pocket!



Natalie's Pick

Silver



Lena's Pick

Silver and black



Tish's Pick

Silver and black



Rena's Pick

Silver and black

Roasted Turkey

A Very CE Thanksgiving

Hosting Thanksgiving dinner can be a breeze if you use some of the cool electronic kitchen devices that are so popular right now to help you out. In this month's special two-page Exit, we give you some of our favorite family recipes from Thanksgiving that are a snap to prepare with a side of CE, and we throw in some entertaining tips for good measure.

Entertaining Tip!

Quietly Clean Your Kitchen

The last thing you want to do after you guests leave is clean up. Get as much of it done beforehand as you can. Use the Bosch Integra Limited Dishwasher (\$897; www.boschappliances.com), which uses a scanning technology to reduce water usage by 30%. (Who doesn't like to save a little money around the holidays?) Plus, it's uniquely quiet, so you can have it on during dinner without disrupting your guests' conversations.

Green Bean Casserole

- 2 15-ounce cans of cut green beans, drained
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can French-fried onions
- Salt and pepper to taste

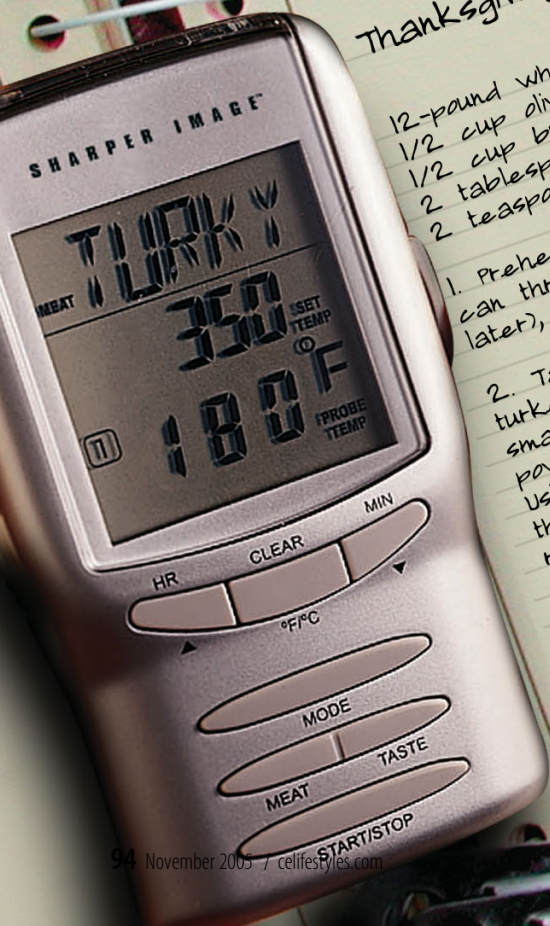
1. Combine green beans, milk, cream of mushroom soup, and half of the onions.
2. Because you'll likely not have room in your oven for yet another dish (Thanksgiving turkeys are big!), use T-Fal's Avante Elite digital programmable toaster oven (\$139.99; www.tfalusa.com), which you can set to any temperature for baking or broiling, right on your countertop. Bake the casserole for 25 minutes at 350 degrees or until it's heated through and bubbling.
3. After the initial 25 minutes, sprinkle the rest of the onions on the top and return to the oven for five minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
4. You can also use the Avante Elite's warming compartment to keep your dinner rolls warm before your guests arrive.



Thanksgiving Turkey

- 12-pound whole turkey
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1 teaspoon ground sage
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups chicken stock

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Clean out your turkey (you can throw away the innards, or you can save and use later), and place it in a roasting pan with a lid.
2. Take 1/4 cup of butter and spread it under the turkey's skin. Melt the remaining 1/4 cup of butter in a small bowl, combine your olive oil, melted butter, garlic powder, dried basil, ground sage, salt, and black pepper. Using a basting brush, apply the mixture to the outside of the turkey. Pour your chicken stock into the bottom of the roasting pan and cover with the lid.
3. Bake this for 3 to 3-1/2 hours or until the internal temperature of the thickest part of the thigh measures 180 degrees. And don't be tethered to the kitchen; you can spend more time mingling with your guests if you use the Remote Cooking Thermometer/Timer (\$49.95; www.sharperimage.com) to alert you when your turkey's temperature is perfect. Remove the turkey from oven and allow it to stand for about 30 minutes before carving.



Recipe from
kitch

Dinner Rolls

3 cups bread flour
3 tablespoons white sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup dry milk powder
1 cup warm water

2 tablespoons softened butter
1/4 ounce active dry yeast
(this is usually 1 package)
1 egg white
2 tablespoons water

1. The last thing we want to do on Thanksgiving Day is to get all floury and messy by kneading bread dough. Use Panasonic's Automatic Bread Maker (\$149.95; www.panasonic.com) to do the kneading for you. First, place the yeast in the unit's Yeast-Pro Dispenser; it will automatically add it to your dough at the proper time in the cycle. Then, place the flour, sugar, salt, milk powder, water, and butter in the bread machine pan. Set on Dough cycle and press Start.

2. Remove the risen dough from the machine, deflate it, and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces and form each into a ball. Place these on a lightly greased baking sheet and cover with a damp cloth. Let them rise until doubled, which takes about 40 minutes.

3. In a small bowl, mix together the egg white and 2 tablespoons water. Brush this mixture onto each of the rolls. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until they're golden brown.

4. You can also sprinkle these with sesame seeds or poppy seeds before baking for a festive look. If it's easier, you could make these the evening before Thanksgiving and warm them in the T-Fal Avante Elite's warming compartment before serving.

Entertaining Tip!

Don't Forget The Drinks

Serve your guests Merlot and champagne at the perfect temperatures with the Avanti 28 Bottle Dual Zone Wine Refrigerator (\$365; www.avantiproducs.com). And be sure you make coffee to go with dessert: Grind and brew in one device (and, if it's networked, do it while you're still at the table) with the Beyond Smart Mill & Brew Coffee Maker (\$128.99; www.beyondconnectedhome.com).



Pumpkin Pie



Pumpkin Pie & Vanilla Ice Cream

Pie:

3/4 cup sugar	2 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt	15 ounces of canned pumpkin
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon	12 ounces evaporated milk
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger	1 9-inch deep-dish pie shell (unbaked)
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves	

1. Mix sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves. Beat eggs in a separate bowl. Stir in canned pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture and gradually stir in the evaporated milk. Pour pie mixture into pie shell.

2. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes and then reduce the oven's temperature to 350 degrees. Bake for 45 minutes or until knife comes out clean. Cool for two hours and serve with homemade vanilla ice cream.

Ice cream:

2 cups half-and-half
2 cups whipping cream
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk
2 tablespoons vanilla

Mix these ingredients well. Pour into Panasonic's EZ Ice Cream Maker (\$49.95; www.panasonic.com), which uses a microprocessor to monitor the temperature and texture of the mixture, and follow the directions in the users manual. Serve one scoop on the side of a slice of pumpkin pie.

Entertaining Tip!

Set The Mood

What's a party without some tunes? Make sure to play dinner music softly in the background; jazz and classical favorites are sure to please your guests. We love the Sonos Digital Music System (\$1,199; www.sonos.com) for music through your whole house: It's easy to set up, easy to move, and easy to use.

technology
for your
life



Lifestyles™

USE YOUR BRAIN

left side

right side

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